

# Round and about Kilbarchan

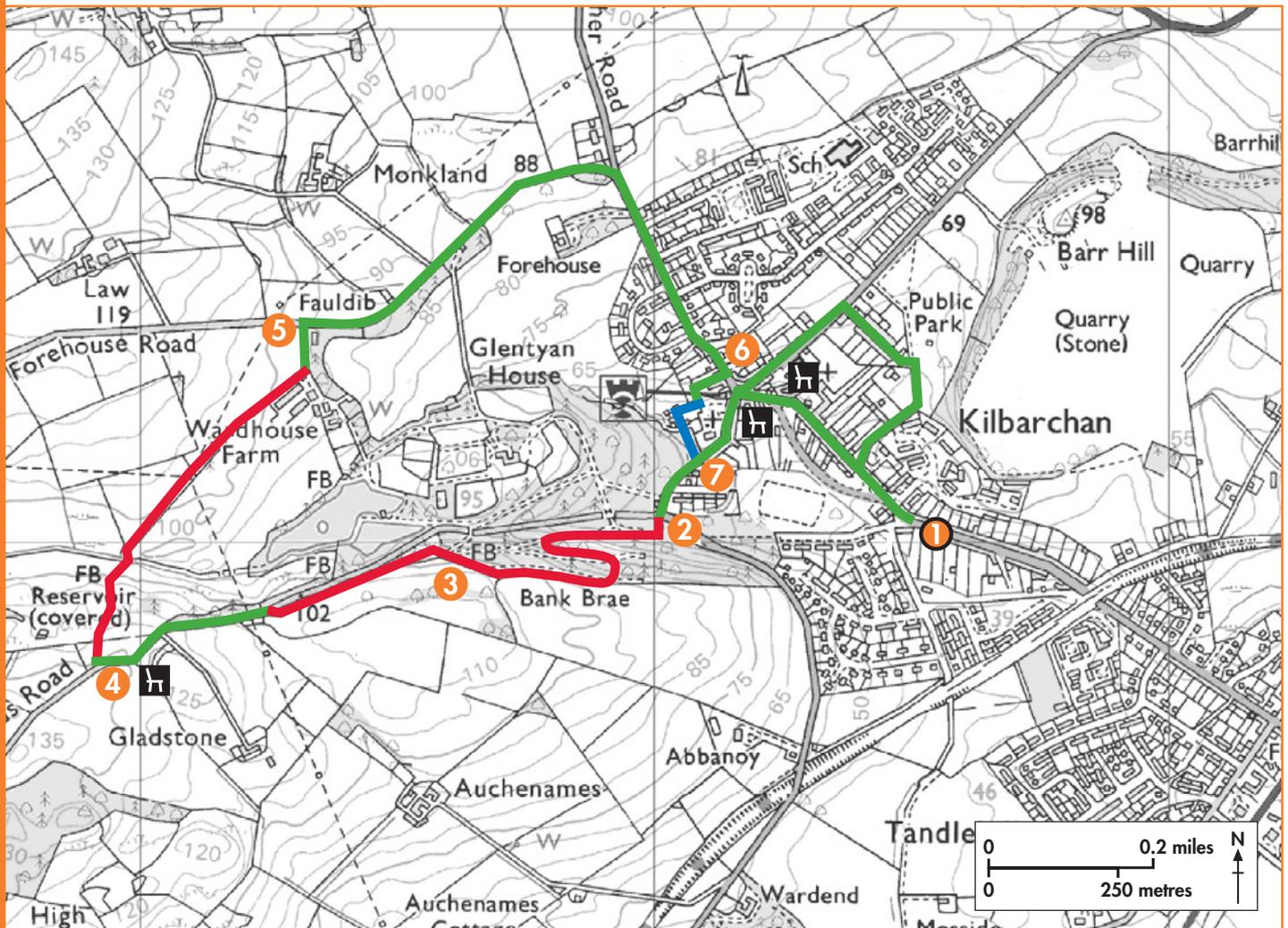
This walk contains the very essence of rural Renfrewshire - a picturesque weaving village, the wooded parklands of a mansion house, and rolling green countryside. Plus there's the added appeal of a teashop and craftshop and a good choice of pub lunches !

**Start and finish** The walk starts and finishes at the War Memorial, which is in the centre of the village at the junction of High Barholm, Barn Green and Station Road (grid reference NS 404631). It is on the left hand side of High Barholm as you approach from Paisley and Glasgow.

**Distance** Just over 5km (3 miles). Allow 2 hours.

**Terrain** A mixture of pavements in the village, woodland paths and grassy fields. Boots recommended as there are some muddy sections outside the village. There are some fallen trees and stiles to negotiate. Dogs should be kept on leads between points 3 and 4 as the fields contain livestock.





1 From the War Memorial, carefully cross the main road. Turn left along the pavement, past the postbox, and up Ewing Street towards Kilbarchan Steeple at the top of the hill. (Just before the Steeple itself, it is worth turning right to look around the interesting Steeple Square and East Church.) Continue past the Steeple and round the left hand bend, where the road becomes Steeple Street. Go past the shops, and then cross the main road carefully opposite the vets. Continue in the same direction on the other side of the road and, after a few metres, take the first left into the delightful Church Street (take care, no pavement). Set in the wall of Glentyan Estate is a fountain in memory of radical weaver poet Robert Allan (1774-1841). After almost 500m, you come to a T-junction with Burntshields Road.

**Churches and steeples** Appearances can deceive: the first steeple you see – Kilbarchan Steeple – has never been a church. It was built as a combined school and market in 1755. But Kilbarchan's origins do lie in religion, many centuries earlier. The village is named after St Barchan, a 7<sup>th</sup> century saint who lived in the village. There are two eighteenth century churches in the village: the delightful East Church with its atmospheric graveyard, tucked away behind the Steeple in one corner of Steeple Square, and the picturesque Old Parish Church on Church Street, built in 1724. It is now the church hall for the West Church, the Victorian red sandstone church next door. The West Church was built on the site of an earlier church.

Steeple Street 1890s



Habby Simpson on the steeple



Steeple Street present day



**2** Cross Burntshields Road carefully. Left of the sign “Burntshields Road”, there is a muddy path leading directly into a woodland known as Bank Brae. Follow this into the wood. About 15m from the road, a clearer path leads off to the right, gently uphill. Although this is tarmac underneath, take care with muddy patches and occasional fallen trees. After about 150m, there is a short steeper section. The path then swings round sharply to the left. It continues gently uphill in the other direction, now narrower and stony. The path soon curves round to the right, directly uphill (ignore a narrow path off to the left), and then levels out at the top of the hill. Another path joins you from the left. Continue on the path through open woodland, parallel with a wall, fence and fields on your left.

**3** About 300m from where the path levelled out, it narrows and drops down towards a pond. The path fades away for about 10m but you soon meet a much clearer level path coming in from your right beneath you. Turn left along this path, past the pond. You are now walking through a narrow strip of woodland between the wall/fence on your left and a road on your right. The path gets less clear as you continue, but eventually leads down to the road about 500m beyond the pond. Turn left along the road (no pavement) for almost another 500m until you come to a green footpath signpost on your right to Dampton Pad.

**Glentyan House** A mansion house set in rolling parkland is characteristic of the Renfrewshire countryside. It reflects the agricultural wealth of the countryside in previous centuries and, more recently, the proximity of Renfrewshire to industrial Clydeside for those who had made their fortune and wanted to live as landed gentry.

Glentyan House is one of these grand houses, a Georgian mansion built in the late eighteenth century. The woodland section of this walk, after point 2, passes through ground which is part of Glentyan estate. In the winter, you can catch a glimpse of the House off to the right through the trees. When the estate was laid out 200 hundred years ago, there was a network of driveways through the woodland. Some of these still remain. They were linked to the House with a bridge across Burntshields Road, down in the dip, so that the laird could stroll around his estate without having to set foot on the public road !

**4** From here to point 5, there is no clear path – but the navigation is straightforward. Go over the stone stile in the wall. Look across the field directly in front of you. Slightly to the right, you will see two electricity pylons close together on the skyline about 500m away. Head towards these pylons, over a stone stile in the wall about 50m away. Continue down the hill, trending slightly right through a gap in the gorse bushes. Once through the gap, head slightly left, directly down the hill and through a bigger gap in the bushes. At the

bottom of the hill there is a wooden fence. At the right hand end of the fence there is a footbridge over the burn. Go over the bridge, and then follow the stone wall uphill and round to the right. You go under the two pylons about 200m from the bridge. Continue in the same direction alongside the wall, over a stone stile immediately after the pylons, past some buildings on your right, and over another stone stile onto a tarmac lane (300m from the pylons). Turn left along this lane to reach a T junction after 100m.

**5** Turn right at the T junction and walk along the road. Although it is quiet, take care as there is no pavement. After 1 km, you come to a T junction with a busier road (Shuttle Street). Carefully cross over onto the pavement on the other side, and head downhill to the right into the village. When the pavement reappears on the other side of the road, carefully cross back over again.

**6** After 500m (before you reach the big road junction) is a white building, set back slightly, with a big black door (McQuade's Antiques). Turn right down the narrow pedestrian lane immediately before this building. There is a little footbridge over the lane, which twists around the back of the West Church between old stone walls, becoming narrower before spilling out in front of a white house at the top of Merchant's Close (100m along the lane). Turn left down to a T junction with Church Street.

Bank Brae Kilbarchan



Fairy Foxglove





Kilbarchan Steeple



Hawthorn Blossom

**Weaving** In the eighteenth century, weaving began to displace agriculture as the main source of jobs in the village. The number of weavers grew rapidly through the century: in 1695 there were 30 or 40 weavers in the village, but in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century there were nearly 1,000 looms, mainly in people's homes. They brought good income to the weavers, and made Kilbarchan a prosperous place. Although the weavers were very clever at spotting new markets to keep business flowing in, the coming of the power-loom in the 1880s saw the start of a terminal decline of the village's traditional cottage-based weaving industry.

The legacy of weaving can still be seen today. The Weaver's Cottage, at the crossroads of Steeple Street, Shuttle Street and Church Street, was a combined house and weaving workshop for two hundred years. It is now open to the public to give a fascinating evocation of the weavers' alternate success and depression (see "Further information"). Gateside Place, near the end of the walk, consists of rows of cottages built as workshops for looms downstairs with flats above.

**7** Turn left up Church Street (take care, no pavement). You have already been along here in the opposite direction, between points 1 and 2. After 150m you arrive at a crossroads. Cross Shuttle Street carefully to the left at the junction (beware fast traffic) and continue along New Street. Cross the road to the right hand side when it is safe. 250m along New Street, turn right into Gateside Place. At the bottom of the road, continue along the tarmac footpath. After about 50m it enters the park. Turn right along another path, which leads out of the park and becomes a wider lane (Well Road). 150m from the park you arrive at a T junction with Steeple Street. Turn left. This takes you back to the war memorial and the start of the walk in 100m.

### Getting to the start

Why not come by public transport or bicycle? There are frequent buses between Kilbarchan and Johnstone (connecting with an excellent rail service to Glasgow Central), Paisley and Glasgow, and the National Cycle Network provides easy, level cycling access from Paisley, Linwood and Johnstone.

**Bus** Arriva 36 from Glasgow, Paisley and Johnstone (6 times an hour Mondays to Fridays, hourly Sundays). Alight at Kilbarchan War Memorial, at the junction of Station Road, High Barholm and Barn Green.

**Rail and bus** Johnstone station is 4km (2 miles) from the start of the walk. 4 trains an hour from Glasgow, Paisley and the Ayrshire coast (3 trains an hour on Sundays). There are frequent buses from outside Johnstone station to the start of the walk. Walk out of the station to Thorn Brae, the main road, and catch an Arriva 36 (downhill, destination 'Kilbarchan'). See Bus section for more details.

**Bicycle** Kilbarchan is on National Cycle Network cycletrack 7 between Paisley, Johnstone, Lochwinnoch and the Ayrshire coast. Leave the cycletrack at a blue signpost to Kilbarchan and go left down the hill. At the bottom, turn right along Low Barholm. Follow this for 400m until you come to the War Memorial on your left, at the junction with Station Road. Bring a lock for your bike.

**Car** Kilbarchan is just off the A737 between Glasgow and Irvine. From the M8, take the A737 exit signposted Irvine (junction 28a, immediately after Glasgow Airport). Then take the third exit (signposted Kilbarchan), turn right and follow signs into the village.

The start of the walk is about 1 km from the A737, at the War Memorial on the left hand side of the road. Please park considerately.

Please check rail and bus times with Traveline Scotland before travelling. Tel: 0870 608 2 608 [www.travelinescotland.com](http://www.travelinescotland.com)

### Refreshments

**Bobbins** tea room and craft shop 25 Steeple St 01505 705509  
Open from 9am Monday to Saturday. Meals until 3pm. Teas, coffees and cakes until 5pm.

**Trust Inn** Low Barholm. Lunchtime and evening bar meals Monday to Saturday, lunchtime and afternoon bar meals on Sundays.

**Glenleven Inn** 25 New Street. Lunchtime and evening bar meals Wednesday to Saturday, lunchtime and afternoon bar meals on Sundays.

**Grocers/newsagents** one on New St, two on High Barholm (Co-op, and between Trust Inn and War Memorial), one on Steeple St (next to Bobbins)

### Further information

The Weaver's Cottage at the junction of Church Street, Shuttle Street, New Street and Steeple Street is owned by the National Trust for Scotland. It is open to the public from Good Friday to 30 September, Friday to Tuesday 1-5pm. For more information call 01505 705588 or, if the Cottage is closed, 0131 243 9300.

For general information about Kilbarchan, visit [www.kilbarchan.org/](http://www.kilbarchan.org/)  
For more information on the history of the village, visit [www.happyhaggis.co.uk](http://www.happyhaggis.co.uk)



Common Nettle and Tufted Vetch