



- **Fairy Knowe Trail**  
3.75 miles / 6km
- **Dinmurchie Trail**  
3.25 miles / 5km
- **Change Forest Trail**  
(also a cycling route)  
8 miles / 13km
- **Devil's Footprint Trail**  
4 miles / 6.5km
- **Kirstie's Cairn Trail**  
4.5 miles / 7km

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# Barr Trails Map

Scale 1:15000





The first part of the walk follows the Water of Gregg for two kilometres before branching off and climbing steadily through the woods along an attractive grass path. Near the highest point beautiful views open up across the Stinchar Valley to the hills beyond. The walk leads steeply down a gully and across Change Burn. In spring and summer numerous wild flowers such as primroses and bluebells can be seen in this area. The edge of the burn is planted with small-leaved lime. Legend has it that near High Change, there is the site of a famous battle between the Laird of Change and the Devil. The story goes that Change was getting short of money and he decided to make a bargain with the Devil. He would sell his soul in return for great wealth. The Laird's fortunes changed and he prospered for many years. When the time came to deliver his soul the Laird reneged on his bargain and refused to go. The Devil proceeded to lay hold of him, but Change placing his Bible on the turf and drawing a circle with his sword around him, sturdily and, as it turned out, successfully defied his opponent. The story must be true, because on the hill above High Change, you may still see the marks of the Devil's footprints, the circle drawn by the sword and the mark of the Bible, on the ground. As you descend westwards, the walk back is a delight with glorious views across the valley to forest and hills beyond.

## The Devil's Trail

4 miles / 6.50km



No climbing is required in this, the easiest of the routes described in this leaflet. The trail follows the delightful Water of Gregg up the valley to the Howe of Laggan, passing through mature woodland as far as Kirstie's Cairn. Christopher McTaggart (Kirstie to his friends and family) a nineteen year old shepherd lad set out on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1913 in a raging blizzard to care for his sheep. Later that day he was found dying by his twin brother David and two friends. Their efforts to restore heat to his frozen body were in vain. He died fifteen minutes later. With such weather they were unable to carry his body back. Kirstie's faithful dog "Wag" refused to leave his master. The following day between twenty and thirty men set out for the Howe of Laggan to bring back the body of their friend. At Kirstie's funeral the Reverend John Angus charged the young men of the village to raise a memorial to the young shepherd and this they did by building a cairn a few yards from the spot where he died. Returning walkers should look out for roe deer and amongst our feathered friends long-tailed tits, jays, siskins and bullfinches.

## Kirstie's Trail

4.5 mile / 7km

For those who appreciate a combination of forest and open hill, this walk will suit admirably. Following the track through the forest you suddenly clear the trees at the top of the hill, from where you can look down on the picturesque village of Barr and across the Stinchar Valley. If you are lucky you may see some of the wildlife including deer, foxes, hares, kestrels and buzzards. The route now descends along the old road which runs from the Water of Minnoch to Barr as described in Armstrongs 1773 map of Ayrshire. The village of Barr is known by local people as "The Barr" which is thought to mean the confluence of the waters. The trail passes close to Dinnurchie Farm which was the birth place of James Dairymple (1619-95) who became the first Viscount of Stair and was the author of the "Institutes of the Law of Scotland". The village is worth exploring from the historical viewpoint. The area has a considerable Covenanting history. In the old church yard there are two Martyrs' stones, one of which is to Edward Mckeen who was arrested by soldiers at the farm of Dalwyne following suspicion that a prayer meeting was taking place. He was dragged out and after some questioning the officer in charge shot him twice through the head. One of the soldiers of the party thought he saw Mckeen move and shot him a third time. This all happened in 1685 when such events were commonplace in the "killing times", however Barr is now noted for its peace and tranquillity. To stroll back along the narrow road which follows the Water of Gregg with its attractive wooded banks makes a fitting end to a memorable walk.

## Dinnurchie Trail

3.25 miles / 5km

## Change Forest Trail

8 miles / 13k



Of all the routes described in this leaflet this is the most strenuous due to its length. Although designated as a cycle route, those wishing to walk it will also find it worthwhile. Continuing up the Howe of Laggan there are excellent views over the Polmaddie Hill Group, which rises to over 18,000ft. This is an area which is still predominantly sheep country, where sheep paths and folds are evident. The route takes you through the heart of Change, now a commercial forest in its many stages of development. The main species which can be seen are Sitka Spruce, Norway Spruce and Larch with some broadleaf trees including oak, ash and birch. Looking northeast you can see that well-known Galloway mountain pass called "Nick of the Balloch". In olden times this was famous as a smuggling route. Men with pack horses would follow the perilous path and at the summit drink from the "brandy well", a spring which still flows with clear crystal water. The word "Change" of Gaelic origin means : the large rounded hill-shoulder of the nigh impenetrable inner row of storm-swept mountains. A lengthy meaning perhaps but one which accurately describes this area, especially during winter. This is a notable excursion taking in the full aspect of the forest with its many magnificent views.

## The Fairy Knowe Trail

3.75 miles / 6km

Downhill from the car park the walk follows the Water of Gregg past Change House to a point where the track forks sharp right and ascends to the forest. Continuing through the trees for 500yds the route bears left along a woodland trail. From this elevated route overlooking the Gregg Valley occasional views are glimpsed through the trees over the Change Forest to the hills beyond. Once clear of the trees and on to the open hill an impressive vista opens up to the east. Haggis Hill, Rowantree Hill and Pinbreak Hill form an impressive backdrop and beyond the Nick of the Balloch, an exciting hill pass on the road from Crossbill and Barr, which meets the Straiton road at the Rowantree Toll. Descending to a wooden footbridge the burn is crossed at an attractive waterfall and the way continues down along a narrow ridge to the valley below. Care should be taken when negotiating this ridge, as the path is steep and often slippery. Traversing the burn you reach a delightful spot called Fairy Know where it is worth pausing for a minute and looking back up the gully to where the burn rushes down a spectacular cleft in the hills. At this point you have the option, either to walk back down the Gregg Valley to the start or if you feel energetic you can turn right and continue along the Devil's Trail to make a longer yet rewarding excursion.



**For your guidance and safety**

Each circular route has been allocated a colour code, which can be followed on the waymarker posts. All trails start and finish at the car park areas. Most circular routes can be described as moderate, however, there are sections on the Devil's Trail, the Fairy Knowe and the Dinnurchie Trail which involve some steep climbing. Go prepared for muddy paths and wet weather. Stout shoes or boots and waterproofs are advisable. Be aware that mobile phone coverage is poor in this area, and you should not rely on it. Toilets and shop are located in the village. Please follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, and respect this beautiful countryside, which is also a working environment and provides a livelihood for many people.



# Barr Trails



The Scottish Outdoor Access Code  
 Respect the interests of other people;  
 Care for the environment;  
 Take responsibility for your own actions.