

Paisley's Parks

Paisley's parks are as varied as the town itself. This route takes you to some of the most interesting parks. You'll see the statues and flowers of Dunn Square, Brodie Park's sweeping lines of trees, and the wildlife haven of Jenny's Well Local Nature Reserve. As you walk between the parks, you'll also get a flavour of the other interesting things that Paisley has to offer – and that's without mentioning the twelfth century Abbey, the Sma' Shot Cottages, and the internationally famous textile collections in the Museum and Art Gallery... Do come back and explore again !

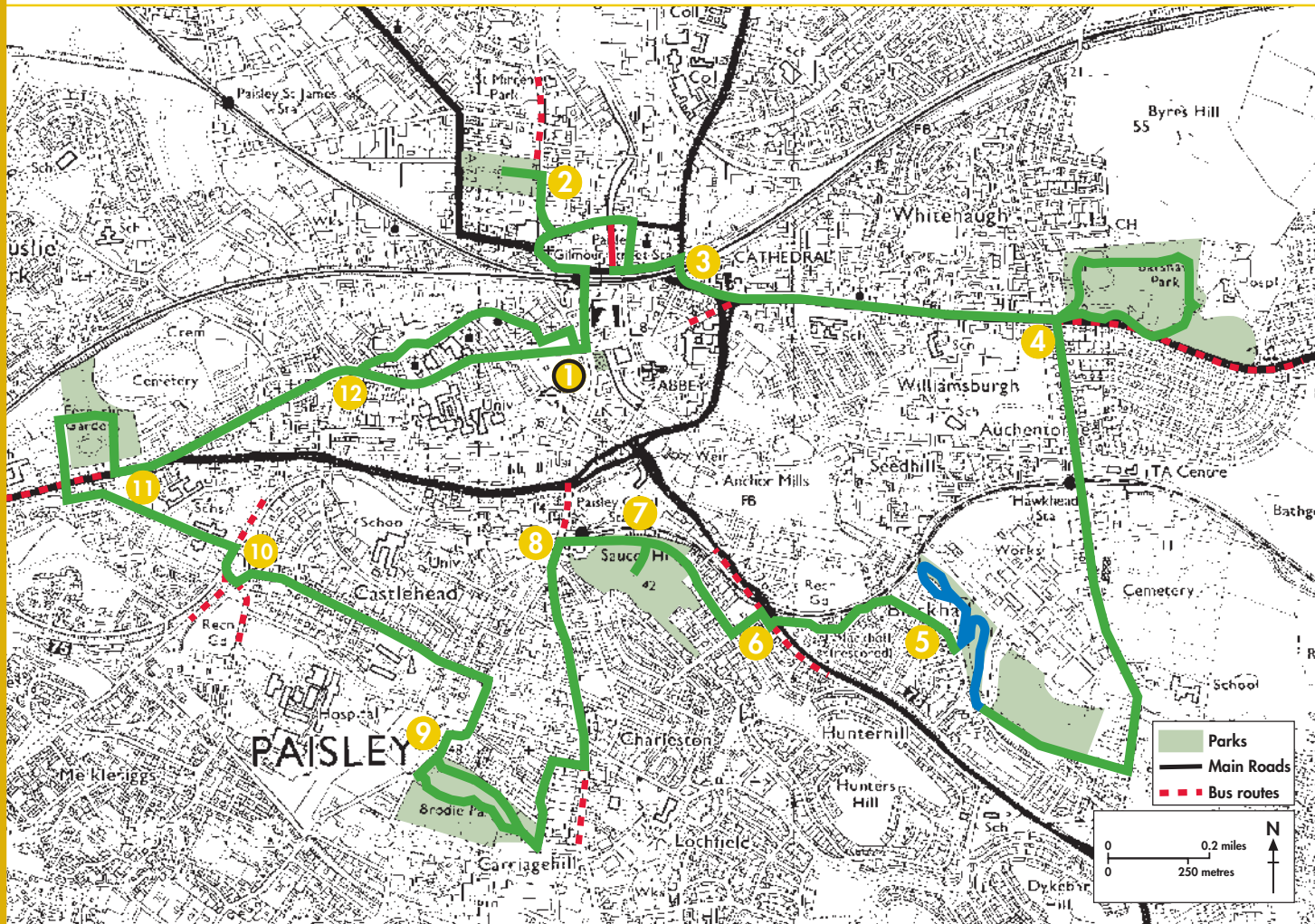
Start and finish Paisley Cross - the junction of the High Street, Causeyside Street and Gilmour Street in the very centre of Paisley.

Distance 14km (8.5 miles). Allow most of the day. Alternatively, split the walk up into smaller chunks over a few days, using the frequent buses that cross the route.

Terrain The walk is entirely on pavements or good footpaths. Walkers should wear comfortable shoes. Wheelchair users should note that there are loose gravel paths in Jenny's Well and Ferguslie Gardens, and steps (which can be avoided) alongside the White Cart Water in the town centre. The directions will lead you from park to park, feel free to wander at will around each park.



Brodie Park



1 Go down Gilmour Street and under the railway bridge at Gilmour Street Station. Turn immediately left into Old Sneddon Street. Continue across Moss Street to the pelican crossing in St James Street in front of the imposing Sheriff Court building. Cross St James Street, and go down the right hand side of the Sheriff Court into Love Street. The entrance to **Fountain Gardens** is on the left after 150m, between the two park lodges.

Fountain Gardens Originally laid out in 1797, Fountain Gardens are Paisley's oldest public park. The current layout and name date from the 1860s. It consists of a grand geometric layout with broad walkways, all of which lead to the ornate cast iron fountain at the centre which contains statues of herons, dolphins and walruses. Elaborate ironwork abounds - even the rocks around the fountain are cast iron! Everything was paid for by the Coats family of Ferguslie. Fountain Gardens was one of many buildings and gardens they donated to Paisley when they dominated the town's cotton manufacturing industry in Victorian times. You'll see more of their contributions to the town later. The park also boasts one of the finest statues of Robert Burns, by F W Pomeroy. The statue was paid for from the proceeds of concerts by local choirs.

2 Go back onto Love Street, and cross the road at the





Statue of Robert Burns by F.W. Pomeroy, Fountain Gardens

pelican crossing on your left. Turn right along Love Street back towards the town centre. After 150m, follow the pavement round to your left alongside an unnamed busier road. Cross this road at a pelican crossing by the Royal Bank of Scotland. Continue along the other side of the road for a few metres, then turn right down a flight of steps. Follow the old quayside alongside the White Cart Water and up the steps at the far end. Seagoing ships used to sail from here! Turn left along Old Sneddon Street for 50m, then cross the road at the traffic light junction with Abercorn Street. Continue along Old Sneddon Street, which changes name to Weir Street. (To avoid the steps, continue over the White Cart Water and take the first right into Abercorn Street. After 100m, you will reach Old Sneddon Street at the traffic light junction just mentioned. Cross the road and turn left.)

3 150m from where you crossed the road you will reach the end of Weir Street. Cross the road in front of you using the pelican crossing. Turn right and go under

the railway bridge. You are now on Ince Street, which curves round to the left. 200m from the railway bridge, fork left into broad Glasgow Road, in front of St Mirin's Cathedral (St Mirin is Paisley's patron saint). Follow Glasgow Road for about 1.5km to a crossroads with traffic lights. The entrance to **Barshaw Park** is at this crossroads.

Barshaw Park Paisley's largest park, opened in 1911 in the grounds of the imposing Barshaw House at the top of the hill – recently converted to flats. The park is well worth exploring. There's a nature corner, boating lake, tennis courts, BMX track, model railway, toilets, a well-equipped children's play area, and good views out over Paisley from the hill. The plan shows a route through the park.

4 From the entrance to Barshaw Park, use the traffic lights to cross Glasgow Road and then Hawkhead Road. Go along the right hand side of Hawkhead Road, past Hawkhead Railway Station. After 1.5km, you cross the White Cart Water. 200m

further on, turn right into Jenny's Well Road. At the end of this short dead end, continue along the tarmac cycletrack. This leads past a football pitch and play area. About 300m from the end of Jenny's Well Road, the cycletrack joins Todholm Road. Ignore the first track immediately on the right (no sign), but turn down the second track just beyond it, signposted **Jenny's Well** Local Nature Reserve. Where the path divides after 50m, fork right. The path loops down towards the river and after 500m arrives at a path crossroads. To explore the reserve further, turn right and follow the loop round and back to the junction (an extra 500m or so). Otherwise, go straight on at the path crossroads and out onto Cartha Crescent.

Jenny's Well Local Nature Reserve Unique amongst Paisley's parks, Jenny's Well is a nature reserve along the White Cart Water – a peaceful haven for wildlife not far from the centre of town. Formerly a quarry, the area has now been landscaped and has a network of paths. The reserve is home to dozens of species of birds, trees, flowers, orchids – even otters and eels in the White Cart. If you're lucky you might see a kingfisher on the river. There are plenty of benches to sit and have a picnic. The extra loop walk also visits a viewpoint over the river and, reputedly, the oldest viaduct in the world still carrying trains. It was originally built in 1806 as an aqueduct to carry the Glasgow, Paisley and Johnstone Canal. For a leaflet explaining more about Jenny's Well reserve, contact Carts Greenspace (tel: 0141 842 5272 or www.cartsgreenspace.org.uk).



Blackhall Manor

5 Leaving Jenny's Well, turn right along Cartha Crescent. Stay on the right hand side of the road. After 500m, turn right into Weaver Terrace. 50m along at the bend, continue straight on along the tarmac path behind Blackhall Manor, a restored manor originally built in the thirteenth century. This path leads to Barrhead Road.

6 Cross Barrhead Road at the pelican crossing on your left, and then turn right along the road for 100m. Take the second left into Ardgowan Street, and then the first right into Hunterhill Road. Where the road bends sharp right after 200m, continue straight on along the tarmac cycletrack into **Saucelhill Park**.

Saucel Hill The beauty of Saucel Hill is the view from the top. It's well worth leaving the cycletrack and climbing the steep hill on your left. It will only take a couple of minutes to get to the trig point. From there, you can enjoy the same marvellous 360° panorama that countless Paisley Buddies have enjoyed over the generations. The spires and steeples of Paisley's town centre are spread in front of you, with the Highlands floating in the distance on a clear day. Behind you are Gleniffer Braes (see separate walk). When you've had your fill of the view, go back down the way you came and turn left along the cycletrack.

7 Continue along the cycletrack through **Saucelhill Park**. Where the path divides at some new houses, 300m from where you came into the park, fork right towards Paisley Canal Railway Station. Then go up either the ramp or steps to Causeyside Street.

8 Turn left along Causeyside Street (which becomes Neilston Road). Just under 1 km from Paisley Canal station, cross the road at a pelican crossing by some shops. Continue along the right hand side of the road. After 200 m turn into the third road on the right, Mary Street. This soon bends sharp left to become attractive, leafy Carriagehill Drive. At the other end of Carriagehill Drive, turn right into **Brodie Park**. The path into the park divides after a few metres: take either path up through the park to Park Road at the top of the hill.

Brodie Park Brodie Park has a wonderful curving line of lime trees, testimony to the landscape design skills of the Victorians who created it. The park was opened in 1877 in front of 10,000 cheering spectators. It soon became a popular place for rich Paisley families to ride through, showing off their horses and carriages. Although the original bandstand and fountains have long gone, the park is still a beautiful place to relax.



9 At the top of the park, turn right along Park Road. This twists steeply downhill. Cross the road carefully at a traffic island, and then take the first left into Craw Road (300m from Brodie Park). Follow Craw Road right to the far end (1 km).

10 At the end of Craw Road, turn right into Maxwellton Street. Cross the road at the traffic lights here. Go along the left hand side of Maxwellton Street, then take the first left into Maxwellton Road. Follow this for just over 500m, round a left hand bend, to a small roundabout. Turn right at the roundabout and cross the main road, Ferguslie, at the pelican crossing. Go through the narrow metal gate between stone pillars just right of the turreted building (formerly a stable block for the Coats family) and into **Ferguslie Gardens**. Continue straight up to the top of the hill (200m). Turn right at the crossroads and follow the gravel drive, which gradually curves round to the right and down to the main park gates (another 300m).

Ferguslie Gardens These gardens were originally the private grounds of Ferguslie House, a Coats family mansion. The House itself sat on the flat ground at the top of the hill, next to the gravel drive. It was surrounded by formal gardens with rare plants, woodlands, a lake, and stunning views of the Renfrewshire countryside and the Highlands. Although the Coat's mansion was less than five minutes walk from their sprawling mills, it must have represented unattainable wealth for most of the mill workers: the Coats family were thought to be the richest family in Scotland in the nineteenth century. But times change, and the house was demolished in the early twentieth century. The grounds became a public park in 1933.

11 Leave Ferguslie Gardens through the main park gates. Turn left along the main road, Ferguslie, just in front of you. Fork left into Broomlands Street after 150m, and continue along this back towards the town centre.



Paisley skyline from Saucel Hill



Ferguslie Gardens



Dunn Square

12 After nearly 1 km (just after passing the junction with Well Street), you have a choice of routes for the last 1 km back to the Cross. Either continue along Wellmeadow Street and the High Street, past the civic magnificence of the Coats Memorial Church, Museum, Art Gallery and Library (all built by the Coats family) and the busy High Street. Or turn left up narrow West Brae, which leads uphill past the John Neilson Institute, along quiet leafy Oakshaw Street with the Coats Observatory, and then down to Moss Street (the Cross is just a few metres to the right).

Dunn Square This, the most central of Paisley's parks, is also one of its newest. When old buildings in the area were demolished in the second half of the 19th century, the town could not decide what to do with the ground. It lay derelict for a while, not a pretty sight at the heart of a wealthy town. Fortunately the newly elected MP Sir William Dunn bought the ground in 1891 for the town and paid for it to be laid out as a park. Dunn was the son of a shopkeeper in Maxwellton who then made his fortune trading around the world. Three years and £15,000 later, the Square was opened to the public and has remained so ever since.

Getting to the start

Rail Paisley Gilmour Street station is 200m from the start of the walk. Go out of the main entrance, across County Square, and up Gilmour Street to the Cross. Paisley Canal station is about 1 km away (10 minutes walk).

Bus All Paisley bus services either go through the Cross at the start of the walk or along Central Way at the back of the Piazza Shopping Centre. From Central Way, walk up Gilmour Street to the Cross (200m). If you're dividing the walk into sections, you can check which buses to use by contacting Traveline Scotland (tel: 0870 608 2 608, www.travelinescotland.com).

Bicycle The start of the walk is about 1 km from National Cycle Network routes 7 and 75 at Paisley Canal station. There are plenty of bike racks around the Cross. Bring a lock.

Car Follow signs to Paisley town centre. The nearest public car park is at the Piazza Shopping Centre 200m from the start of the walk. From the car park, go up Gilmour Street to the Cross. There are also many other car parks within a few minutes walk.

Refreshments

The town centre has a good selection of cafes and pubs serving food, together with bakers and shops selling sandwiches or takeaway food if you want to take a picnic with you.

Further information

For further information about Paisley, visit the Tourist Information Centre at 9A Gilmour Street (tel: 0141 889 0711) or the Museum, Art Gallery and Central Library on the High Street (tel: 0141 889 3151 or 889 2360).

There's also a wealth of information about Paisley on the internet. Useful starting points are www.happyhaggis.co.uk, www.renfrewshire.gov.uk and www.paisley.org.uk

Ferguslie Gardens



