

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Fife Keith-Cottage Wood-Braehead Circuit (Moray)

Route Summary

There are short sections, at the beginning and end of this walk, on the streets of Keith, but most of the route is easy walking with a rural feel, in the woods and farmland that surround the town.

Duration: 2 hrs.



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: Frequent Stagecoach bus and Scotrail train services pass through Keith. Check timetables. Free parking in Regent Square at the start/end of the walk.

Length: 5.08 km / 3.16 mi. **Height Gain/Loss:** 90 meter.

Max Height: 134 meter. **Min Height:** 118 meter.

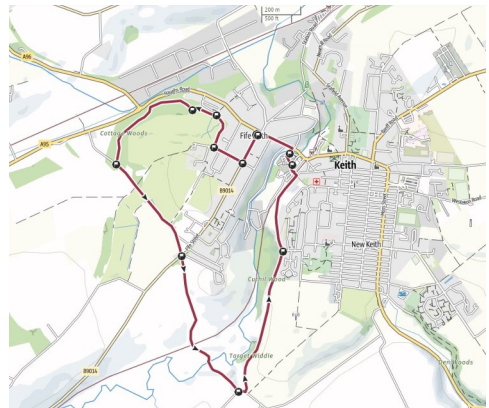
Surface: Moderate. A mix of tarred and rough roads, rough and grassy paths. The circuit is not suitable for off-road mobility scooters due to unavoidable steps and a narrow, stepped bridge.

Difficulty: Easy

Child Friendly: Yes, if children are used to walks of this distance and overall ascent.

Dog Friendly: Yes, but keep dogs on lead on public roads and near farm animals.

Refreshments: Options in Keith. We can recommend the Boogie Woogie Cafe in Regent Square where the walks starts and finishes.



Description

The walk starts and ends at Regent Square in Fife-Keith (the town of Keith can be divided into three parts, from west to east: Fife Keith, Old Keith, and New Keith). The Earl of Fife developed Fife-Keith in 1817 as a planned settlement to support a growing agricultural and textiles local economy, and was set out in a formal arrangement around a central point at Regent Square which was originally going to be named Waterloo (after the battle). Clearly, this militaristic flourish in naming the square was not sustained, although street names such as Regent Street, Wellington and Nelson Terraces, Victoria Place and Alexandria Road make reference to the proudly patriotic feelings of the time, at least in the middle and upper strata of society.

After a pleasant walk around the western and southern boundaries of Fife-Keith, taking in the golf course, woodland, and open countryside, the route climbs up Brandy Brae, overlooking the River Isla, before descending to the Auld Brig over the river, at the heart of the original Old Keith, established around 700 AD when the monks of St. Maelrubha arrived from Applecross to build a chapel there. The River Isla could be forded by cattle at Old Keith and this gave rise to the "Great Simmareve Fair", predecessor of today's Keith Show, when traders from Glasgow to Orkney congregated in Keith for the sale of black cattle and horses. The eye-catching Auld Brig of Keith was built in 1609 and is one of the oldest bridges still in use in Scotland. These days, Keith is best known for its whisky distilleries, but New Keith, established in 1750 by the Earl of Findlater, supported the growth of the weaving industry, and the first great period of agricultural improvement.



Waypoints

(1) Start the walk at Regent Square

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Start the walk from the car-park in Regent Square in Fife Keith after checking out the information boards behind the public toilets. Walk away from the main A96 road up Fife Street.

** Note: The Earl of Fife developed Fife-Keith in 1817 as a planned settlement to support a growing agricultural and textiles local economy. It was set out in a formal arrangement around a central point at Regent Square. It was originally going to be named Waterloo (after the battle)! This patriotic flourish in nomenclature was not sustained, although street names such as Regent Street, Wellington and Nelson Terraces, Victoria Place and Alexandria Road make reference to jingoistic glories.*



(2) Turn right into Mar Place

In 190 m, turn right into Mar Place. (190 m)



(3) Right onto path - signed for Cottage Wood

In 200 m, turn right off the pavement on Mar Place to take a signposted path through the trees. Keep on the main path, with the golf course fairly close on your left side, ignoring any paths veering off to the right. (392 m).



(4) Left after footbridge

In about 220 m, emerge from the woodland over a narrow footbridge and go left along a path, with the gardens of houses on your right side, and the golf course on your left side. Soon, the paths takes you into Cottage Wood. (610 m)



(5) Veer right at y-junction after bench

In 160 m, soon after entering Cottage Wood, just after passing an iron bench on your right side, take the right fork at a y-junction, essentially carrying straight on. Follow the path through the woodland as it goes down and then up, ignoring any minor paths going off right, further down towards the A96 road. Keep going through the wood in a broadly W direction. (770 m)



(6) Down steps and left along minor road

In 720 m, leave Cottage Wood, descending on a set of stone steps to a minor road. Go left here, along the road. (1.49 km)



(7) Straight on at B9014 x-roads

In 700 m, at a x-roads, beside Toll house, go straight over the B9014 Dufftown Road to follow another minor road. In about 550 m the road goes under the railway line, and then after leaving the road to take a path going straight ahead towards the River Isla, in another 70 m cross a narrow footbridge. Follow the track left and uphill from the footbridge, passing the ruin of a flax mill on your left side as you ascend. 2.19 km)



(8) Left at t-junction - then left at walks signpost

In 980 m from Waypoint 7, after crossing the footbridge over the Rover Isla and ascending on a rough access road towards Braehead, go left when you arrive at a t-junction with a minor public road. Then, in less than 50 m, go left onto a grassy track, signposted for Keith Square. Continue ascending on this grassy track up Brandy Brae, with views opening up towards the centre of Fife-Keith. Eventually the track starts to descend. (3.17 km)



(9) Carry straight on downhill

In 950 m, now walking downhill, at a waymarked sign, carry straight on, continuing to descend towards the centre of Keith, with the River Isla below you on your left side and houses, now, on your right side. In about 500 m, go left to cross the railway bridge and then carry straight on before veering very slightly left, going gently downhill for about 55 m as you approach the cemetery on your left side. (4.12 km)



(10) Left into cemetery

In 590 m from Waypoint 9, go left through the iron gate into the cemetery (which you may want to explore). Follow the paths down, then a little to your right to arrive at another iron gate. Go down the steps and through the gate before turning right towards the very obvious and distinctive Auld Brig. (4.71 km)



(11) Cross the Auld Brig

In 100 m from entering the cemetery at Waypoint 10, we suggest that you take some time to take in the eye-catching old bridge and pleasant riverside scene where there are also a couple of old metal information plaques. When you are ready, cross the bridge and ascend the steps to Regent Street (A96). Go left and uphill along the pavement to soon return to your start-point in Regent Square. (4.81 km)



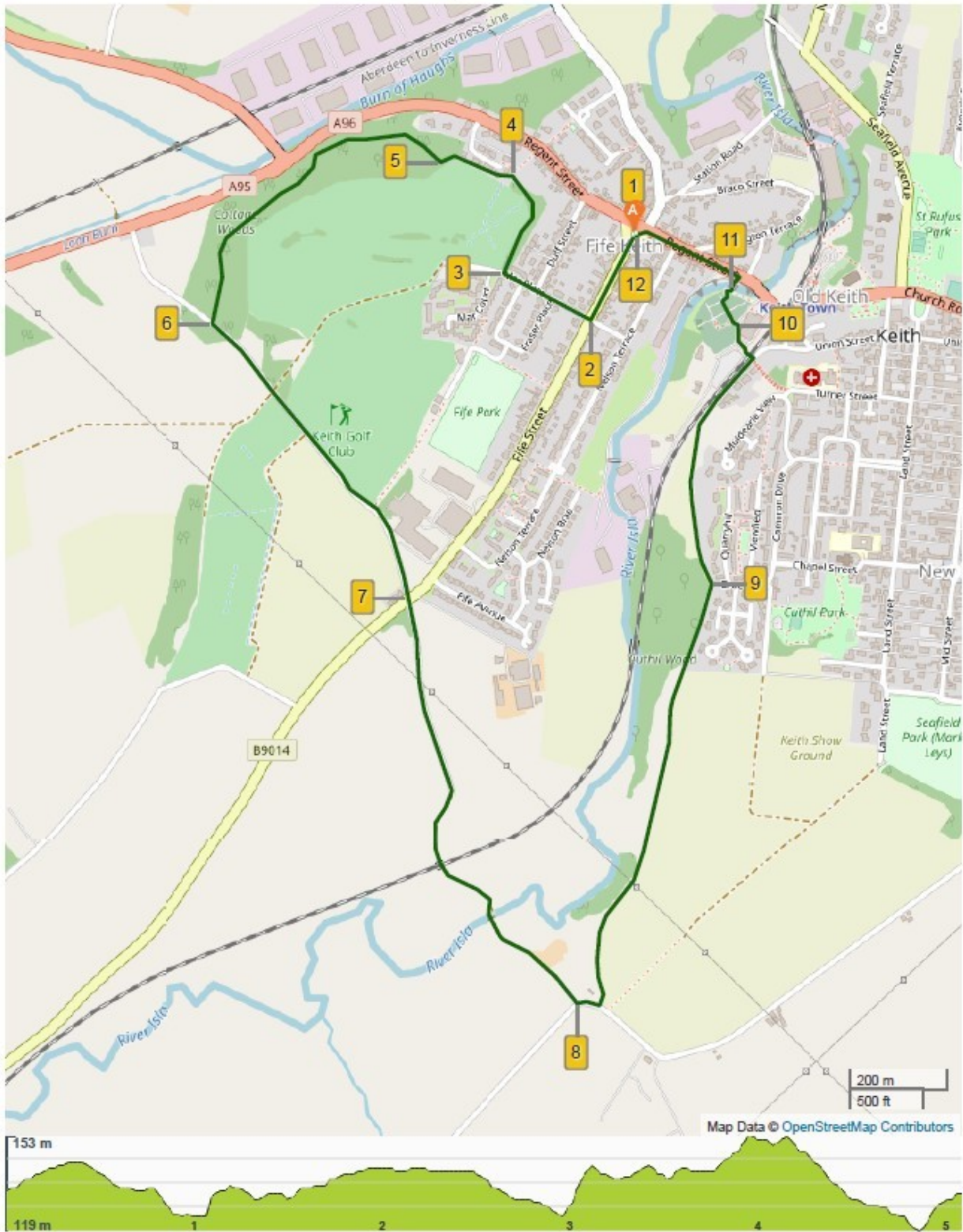
(12) Finish walk back at Regent Square

In 270 m, you will have returned to your start-point in Regent Square. (5.08 km)

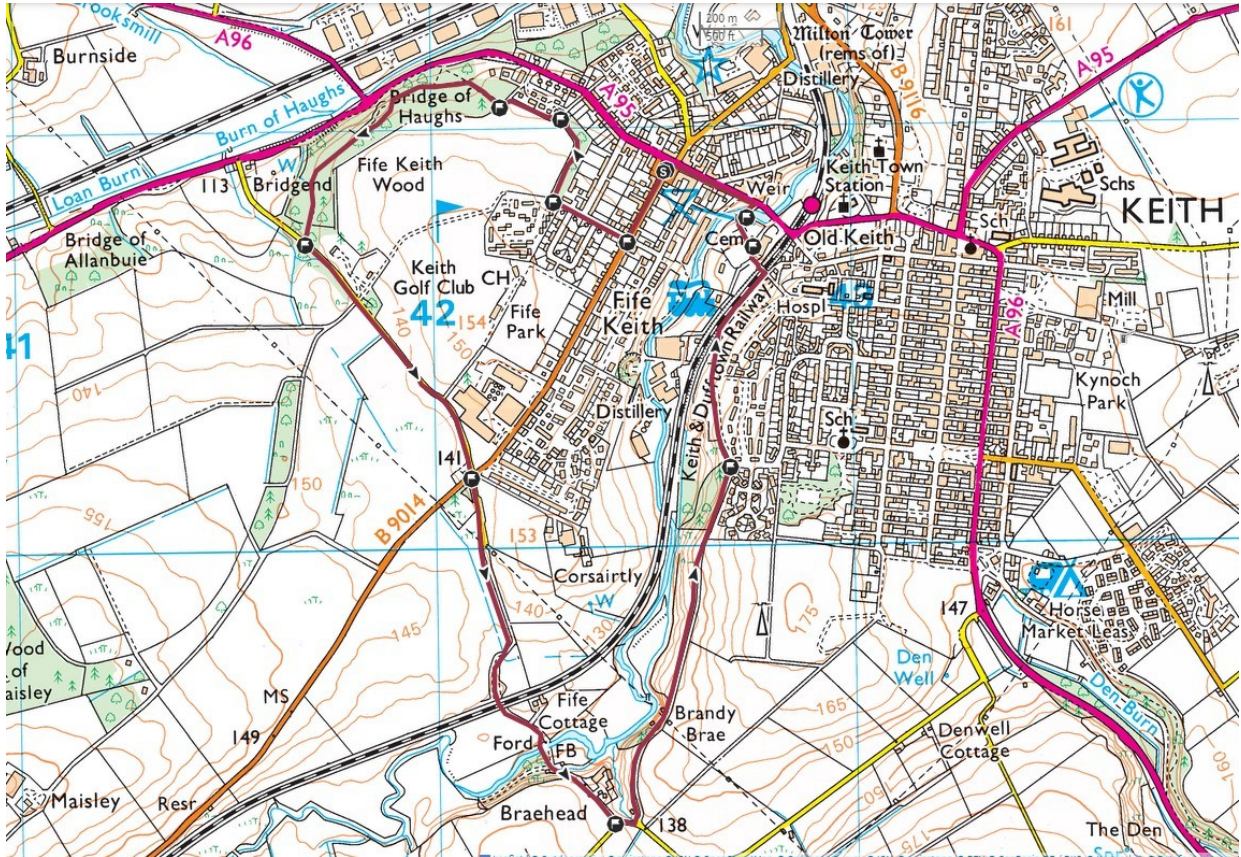


Route Map (with waypoints)

219-Fife Keith-Cottage Wood-Braehead Circuit



Route Map



Links:

[Photos from walk](#)

[Download Route Guide](#) (PDF with illustrated Waypoints)

[Download GPX file](#) (GPS Exchange Format)

[Access Walk on OutdoorActive](#)

[Access Walk on OSMaps](#)

[Access Walk on Alltrails](#)

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