

## Find out more

The Living Lomonds Landscape Partnership is an association of organisations in Fife and Perth & Kinross.

Our aim is to re-connect people with the living legacy of the Lomond and Benarty Hills through a range of community based activities, volunteering opportunities and projects.

Visit the Living Lomonds website [www.livinglomonds.org.uk](http://www.livinglomonds.org.uk) to print more copies of this leaflet and other themed walks in the area and to access the links detailed below.

## Further information

Scottish Place-Name Society [www.spns.org.uk](http://www.spns.org.uk)

Simon Taylor, with Gilbert Márkus *Place-Names of Fife Vol. 2* (Central Fife between Leven and Eden) (Shaun Tyas: Donington 2008). For the place-name data in this and the other Fife volumes, visit: <http://fife-placenames.glasgow.ac.uk/>

W.G. Rowntree Bodie, *Some Light on the Past Around Glenrothes* (Glenrothes 1968)

David Munro *Loch Leven and the River Leven: A landscape transformed* (River Leven Trust 1994)

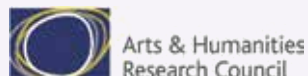
A fuller version of this leaflet and other place-name walk leaflets can be found at <http://onomastics.co.uk/resources/>



## With thanks to

Dr Simon Taylor of the University of Glasgow for his extensive knowledge of place-names and the local area that is shared through this leaflet.

To our funders without whom this leaflet would not have been possible:



## River Leven



## Leslie into the Lomond Hills A themed place-name walk



Re-connecting people  
with the hills

Living Heritage



## Leslie into the Lomonds

This circular walk from the old common on the north side of the ridge-top settlement of Leslie takes you gently upwards onto the south-facing slopes of the Lomond Hills from where there are stunning views north to the summits of East and West Lomond and south across the Firth of Forth to the Lothians. Here you will encounter farms with fascinating names like Balsillie, Little and Meikle Balquhomrie, and Balgothrie. Arriving at the Holl Reservoir, now a summer haunt of fishermen, the walk turns downhill following the tree-lined Strathenny Avenue, a stretch of which is called The Hazels.

Crossing the busy A911 road that leads to Leslie, the walk continues down a minor road towards the River Leven which powered mills during the Industrial Revolution. Coming full circle, the walk returns to Leslie via the planned industrial settlement of Prinlaws whose name is much older than you might imagine.

How did all these names come about? This leaflet will be your guide, helping you explore the landscape and uncover the meaning of place-names in this fascinating corner of Fife.



The Hazels



Strathenny Castle and House

### About the route

This themed walk takes you along a partly signposted route entirely within the parish of Leslie, beginning at the Back Braes car park on the north side of Leslie. For the most part it follows well maintained, but sometimes grassy, farm tracks as well as surfaced roadways.

The names encountered on the trail are guides to the languages of the past, which for this part of Fife are chiefly Pictish, Gaelic and Scots, together spanning around 1,500 years, with the latest names in Gaelic coined about 800 years ago.

If you are travelling by car there is a parking place at the Back Braes as shown on the map. Local transport links can be found via [www.travelinescotland.com](http://www.travelinescotland.com)

### Make your walk enjoyable

Please wear sturdy footwear, take with you suitable clothing and some water and be aware that the weather can quickly change.

### Scottish Outdoor Access Code

While out enjoying the local countryside please follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

[www.outdooraccess-scotland.com](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com)

### Like this – want more?

This themed walk is one of a series in the area. To find out more go to [www.livinglomonds.org.uk](http://www.livinglomonds.org.uk)

## Description

A walk which explores the Pictish, Gaelic and Scots language of place names we are familiar with today.

**Terrain:** Mostly well-made paths with some uneven/unmade sections. Long moderate slopes, with some short steep sections. Particular attention should be taken when crossing the A911.



5.5 miles  
9km  
Allow  
3.5 hours

### 1 Leslie

The settlement and parish came to be known as Leslie in the late 14th century when the Leslie family, deriving their name from Leslie in Aberdeenshire, became feudal superiors of the old barony of Fettykil. Designated *Fitkil* and *Fithkil* c.1175, its church was described as the kirk of *Fethill* alias Leslie in 1555. The name Fettykil, which still survives in the names of a local inn and papermill, is of Gaelic origin, from *fiodh c(h)ill* meaning 'wooden church'.

### 2 Balsillie

Take the footpath round the edge of Leslie Football Ground, then follow the signposted trail by the Balsillie Farms Sand & Gravel Quarry, which opened in 1981. Reaching the farm of Balsillie you will find many willow trees that give the farm its name in Gaelic, *baile* 'farm' and *seileach* 'willow'. See how the name has evolved since the 15th century in forms that include *Balcely* (1488), *Bawcellie* (1510), *Bawsylle* (1522) and *Basilie* (1542).



### 3 Lothrie Burn

Carry on up the Balsillie Avenue till you reach the Lothrie Burn whose early forms as *Zothry burne* (1390), *Luthry B(urn)* (1642) and *River of Lothrie* (1811) suggest a name derived from the Gaelic *lothar* meaning 'trough, vat or tub'; or perhaps from the Gaelic word *loth* 'mud'.



### 4 Little Balquhomrie

Upstream is Little Balquhomrie, which is pronounced 'balhoomrie', with the stress on 'hoom' (rhyming with 'broom'). During the 16th century the lands of Balquhomrie were divided into two parts, Little Balquhomrie and Meikle (Scots 'big') Balquhomrie, a cattle farm that can be seen to the west that was formerly also known as South Balquhomrie. These farms take their name from the Gaelic *baile (a') chomraich* meaning 'the farm of (the) confluence', possibly where the Holl Burn met the Lothrie Burn.



### 5 Balgothrie

Head north-west from Little Balquhomrie with the lands of Balgothrie to the north. This name could be derived from

Gaelic *baile* 'farm,' and *gaoth* 'wind' to give 'windy, exposed farm'. Alternatively, it may be the 'farm on the Lothrie Burn'. From 1825 the town of Leslie was supplied with water from the Balgothrie Well which can be seen on the edge of the conifer plantation to the north of the pathway.

### 6 Holl Reservoir

Pass through a gate to access the dam of Holl Reservoir which was created in the 1890s to supply water to the fast growing settlements of West Fife. It takes its name from the now submerged farm of Holl, a name derived from the Scots word *holl* or *howe* meaning a hollow. This name in written form dates back to *The Hoyll* (1522) and *Hoill* (1542).



### 7 Stratheny

Turning southwards, the walk continues down the tree-lined Stratheny Avenue from where it is possible to catch glimpses, through gaps in the hazels, of Stratheny House. First recorded as *Strathenny* 1179, *Strathanny* c.1263 and *Strathanery* c.1318, it is derived from the Gaelic *s(t)rath* 'strath or broad valley of the Enerly', a burn which runs through the estate of Stratheny. Stratheny's lands go down to the Leven, and the tenants once had to pay annually 1,000 eels, two pigs and one cow to the monastery of Inchcolm.

### 8 Farmlands

At the foot of the avenue turn right along a pavement past the South Lodge of Stratheny House. Take care when crossing the busy main road before heading down a minor road towards the River Leven. On the left is the steading of Farmlands, a name that tells you it was originally 'lands held at ferme', i.e. for rent.



### 9 River Leven

The walk turns left to run parallel to the River Leven in the direction of Leslie. The remains of old mills, sluices and weirs remind us of the river's industrial past, but the Leven also provides us with one of the oldest names on this walk. Styled *Leuine* c.1050, the name is most likely derived from the Celtic word *\*le:uo--* meaning 'smooth', in the sense of smooth- or slow-flowing.

### 10 Prinlaws

The path takes us past the small settlement of Stratheny Mill, originally a corn mill and later a paper mill (1869-1924), one of the many mills along the Leven. We then go into Prinlaws, an extension of Leslie developed in the early 19th century by the Kirkcaldy industrialist John Fergus who owned a number of textile works here. Some of the black whinstone houses built for his employees have survived. The name Prinlaws, however, is much older, probably deriving from the Pictish *\*pren glas* meaning 'green tree', or possibly *\*bren glas* 'green hill'. This name appears as *Prenlas* and *Prenlaws* as far back as 1411, *Prinles* and *Prynlayis* (1574) and *Prinless* (1654). Return to the car park along Prinlaws Road, turning left into Douglas Road at the foot of the High Street. Cross the road to gain access to the grassy common that leads you back towards the Back Braes car park.

