**Just Five Lovely Walks from Mansefield House**

**Tarbet Isle**

An easy circuit, through pinewoods and Oakland with lovely views over Loch Lomond.

**Circular Walk Distance: 2km / 1.25miles**

**Walk Time: 45 minutes**

**Height Gain: 55m**

Drive towards Tarbet and turn left up the A82 for approximately half a mile. The car park is signed from both directions of the A82 on the inland side of the road up a steep drive. From the parking area take the path marked with a yellow marker post heading uphill towards some Scots Pines. The path climbs steadily before easing off and looping to the right and then descending for a short section.

As the path goes through mixed conifer and broadleaved woodland the remains of Caulfield's Military Road which ran from Tarbet to Crianlarich can be seen on the other side of the drystane dyke to the left of the path. Keep following the path as it goes through a gap in the dyke and eventually comes within sight of the Home on the Loch tea room at Blairannich. You can always stop for tea or a hot chocolate! Otherwise continue on the main path as it bears right to head back towards Tarbet Isle.

The woodland is now mainly oak and glimpses of the water of Loch Lomond can be seen through the trees. Tarbet Isle, a small island only 80 metres long and 10 metres at its highest point, can be viewed from here. The island takes its name from nearby Tarbet which itself means the portage place. This name comes from folklore that the 13th century King Haakon sailed his Viking fleet up and down Loch Lomond causing havoc and panic having dragged his boats overland to Tarbet across the narrowest part of the land. There are stories of newly weds having to stay alone on Tarbet Isle for two weeks after their marriage to make sure they were suited!

The path soon returns to the car park where there are also good views of the water.

**Ardgartan Riverside Trail**

**Circular Walk Distance: 1.6km / 1mile**

**Walk Time: 45 minutes**

A delightful stroll through the beech and oak woodland alongside the sparkling Croe Water.

Turn left at the junction at the top of the road, taking the A83 round the other side of the loch. Park in the car park next o the old Forestry Commission Visitor Centre. Take the gravel path by the wooden otters and follow alongside the river. Some grassy and uneven sections with some exposed tree roots, so not ideal for buggies, but a great walk for kids.

Follow the path and markers, cross over the wooden bridge and continue on the path until you reach the road. Take this road to the left until you get to a pink cottage. Cross over the bridge and turn left onto the path until you return to the car park.

You can extend the walk by crossing over the road and taking a path to the left, which takes you down to the Loch, past a boathouse, and along the old campsite, up a wee hill and you will come out onto the road. Take a right and walk along the road (barely any cars use this road) until you get back to the car park.

Watch for red squirrels scampering among the trees and listen for the many species of birds that live in the forest. Otters live here too: you might see their footprints or tail marks on the sandy shore, or if you're very lucky catch sight of one in the river’s large pools. On the loch shore you might see orange-beaked oyster catchers or grey seals.

**Arrochar to Tarbet and back over the Water Track**

**Distance: tbc**

**Walking Time: 1.5hr?**

**Height Gain: approx. 95m**

A lovely combination of village and hillside.

Walk from the house up into the village until you get to the Arrochar Chippy. On the right hand side of the road you will see a small well and a path. Cross the road and climb the few steps opposite to reach an information board with a map of the route. Follow the path uphill following the yellow waymarkers. At the junction turn right and keep following the path.

In the 13th century the Vikings took advantage of the low and short piece of ground between Arrochar and Tarbet (which in Gaelic means place of portage) to carry their longboats overland and carry out raids on the settlements on Loch Lomond. It must have been truly terrifying to see one of King Haakon's longboats appearing out of the mist filled with armed Viking raiders. Now the 2.5km stretch houses the busy A83 linking Glasgow and the east to most of Argyll. As the path climbs there are good views back over Arrochar and across to The Cobbler and Beinn Narnain beyond. You can also see the remains of the second world war torpedo testing station on the far side of Loch Long where there is still a large jetty and some derelict buildings.

The path passes a bench with a good view and continues straight ahead. Stay on the main path, ignoring a rough path to the right through the rhododendrons. At a fine Scots pine, the route passes a wooden barrier and continues to climb uphill. It then winds through beech, birch and oak trees. Ignore a small path joining from the right.

With pine forest on the left side pass a group of carved heads and soon a junction is reached. Turn right here to descend to Tarbet Station. The path to the left which has red waymarkers is the Cruaich Tairbeit Loop which is currently closed for log felling. Follow the path under the railway line.

Turn left onto the road, and left again onto the A83 for a very short time. On the right hand side of the road, you will see a gate and a road leading up the hill. Go through this gate. Continue up the hill until you see another gate just to the right. Take the rough road on a undulating route parallel to Tarbet village.

Continue until you see a wooden directional post to Arrochar. Take the path down and under the railway bridge and down to the village. At the end of the path, continue on to the road, take a left at the doctor’s surgery, and the continue straight down the lane until you get the white house at the end. Scoot round the house and you’re home!

**Glen Loin to Inveruglas**

A rolling, undulating walk, which can be long or short.

**Circular Walk Distance: Approx 17km (12 miles)**

**Walk time: Approx 4/5 hours**

**Height gain: 250m**

(or you can shorten it by not doing the whole loop – just as wonderful!)

One of our favourite walks from the village is to take the Glen Loin Footpath from the head of the loch. Park opposite the caravan park and petrol station, or you can walk from the house if you want to be car free. It’s a lovely meandering walk through the glen towards Inveruglas, at the foot of the Arrochar alps.

A 5.5 kms of path from Arrochar takes you to Coiregrogain, the name for a ruined house but also for the glen to the west. An additional 2 km along the private road from Coiregrogain to Inveruglas takes you  to the main A82 road. This is a one way route, so you’ll nee a second car at Inveruglas, or a friendly pick up!

To make it a lovely 17km circular walk from the head of Loch Long, head west and south west at Coriegrogan along the forest roads to Succoth and the days start point. Starting at Arrochar, heading north on the forest path located east of Loch Long going past Glen Loin House. Follow this path for 5.5 kms heading towards Inveruglas Water. After arriving at Coiregrogain, cross the bridge over Inveruglas Water, at first following the path north towards Loch Sloy with its dam, in 300 metres take the path heading west as it skirts along the lower slopes of Ben Vane, as if heading up Gleann Uaine (Green Valley). After approximately 2 kms the path heads back into the forest and after half a kilometre head east and then south-west along the forest path on the other side of Glen Loin which leads to Succoth and Loch Long and you’re back in Arrochar.

**Want to shorten it?** Head out from the same start date, and walk through the glen until you want to turn back! Simple, and wonderful.

**Further Afield**

**Puck’s Glen**

**Circular Walk Distance: 2.8km / 1.75miles**

**Walk time: 1 hour**

Step into a world of mischievous nature sprites and magical beings in the fabulous Puck's Glen. The forest's moist shady undergrowth and delicious dark atmosphere is great fun to explore. There are two trails here: one winds through the enchanting gorge with its tumbling waterfalls; the other takes a longer route to great viewpoints and some of the finest rhododendron displays in the country.

Turn left at the junction in the village, onto the A83, and continue until the junction with the A815. Turn left and pass the villages of Strachur and Glenbranter. Continue for 12 miles / 19.3 km. Puck's Glen car park is on your left.

A magical trail that winds along a Victorian walkway up the dramatic rocky gorge that is said to be home to mischievous spirits. Pass several waterfalls beneath the towering Douglas firs. During your visit, keep a sharp eye out and you might just spot the mystical Ghillie Dhu!

Firm but uneven gravel paths, with some rough, rocky and narrow sections. Several steep slopes and long flights of rough steps. Includes numerous bridges and some wet sections after rain.

Deservedly the most popular walk on the Cowal peninsula and particularly spectacular after rain. The steep, narrow gorge with its arched wooden bridges and rocky steps is thrilling and full of atmosphere. As you climb past tumbling waterfalls and gushing waters you'll sense the huge trees towering overhead and see sumptuous ferns and fungi thriving on the forest floor. This is a place of fantasy and fun, whatever your age. Great for kids.

If it's been raining, wear waterproofs and be prepared for slippery, wet conditions.

The nearest place for a cup of tea is the Benmore Garden Café. Check their opening times before you go, especially in winter. You can find other places to eat and public toilets in Dunoon (6 miles / 9.6 km away).

Want to know more? Just ask?