



Ayr

History of Ayr

In 1197 a castle was built along the River Ayr. Shortly afterwards, in 1205, King William the Lion created a burgh at Ayr. He laid out streets and set aside plots of land for building houses. William also started a market at Ayr. The town became home to craftsmen such as skinners and fleshers. There was a wool industry with weavers and dyers, a shipbuilding industry and of course the fishermen. Ayr was a busy port with skins, hides and wool being exported.

In the 16th century, Ayr remained a busy port. Wool, fish and hides continued to be exported while wine and salt were imported. The population continued to grow despite 7 outbreaks of the plague. 1647 saw the last outbreak.

During the late 17th and 18th centuries the textile industry in Ayr flourished. Both wool and linen were made and a shoemaking industry also prospered. Some of Ayr's buildings date from this era including Ayr's oldest house, Loudoun Hall. The great road builder John Loudoun Mcadam was born in Ayr in 1756. Other sites of interest in the town are the Town Buildings, Carnegie Library, the Burns Monument, the Wallace Tower, the Auld Brig of Ayr, the 300 year old Auld Kirk and the fragments of Cromwell's Citadel

Ayr is an attractive town with a real sense of history. It has many fine historic buildings, a river that was first bridged 800 years ago, a harbour that for centuries was the most important on the west coast of Scotland, a racecourse dating back (on an earlier site) to 1770 as well as excellent shopping, pubs and restaurants.







Description of Walks

The River Ayr Way through Ayr

The River Ayr Way is a 66km (44 mile) route which follows the River Ayr from its source at Glenbuck to the sea at Ayr. Seven local path networks around the villages of Muirkirk, Sorn, Catrine, Mauchline, Annbank and Mossblown, Tarbolton and Coylton have also been developed to provide local connections and circular walks to further enhance the walking experience in Ayrshire.





The route enters Ayr from the A77 on the south bank of the river, skirting the Holmston residential area. Follow this until you come to 'Wallace's Heel'. Legend has it that Wallace left his footprint here when he leapt the River Ayr, running from the English.

Shortly after this point, the route crosses the river to Craigie Estate. Craigie Estate dates from the early 18th Century and is a fine example of an historic designed landscape. The route takes you through some of the formal gardens, but it is worth taking time to explore them further.

Craigie Estate was bought by Ayr Town Council in 1940 for £12,500 and as well as providing a beautiful park for the people of Ayr, it also now provides the setting for Craigie Business Centre, a campus of Paisley University and Craigie Teaching College.

While walking the River Ayr Way through Craigie you will see lots of wildlife including swans, mallard ducks and heron. If you are lucky, you may see an otter too.

From Craigie, the route passes Ayr College and continues to the Auld Brig. After crossing the Auld Brig, you will get a glimpse of the bustling harbour town as you walk down the High Street, onto Harbour Street, skirt around the Citadel Leisure Centre, and down to the promenade.

north along the promenade takes you to the end of the River Ayr Way at the South Pier. Here you will also see the River Ayr Way gateway feature, designed by Scottish artist, Donald Urquhart. The piece is made from powdered coal from Glenbuck making reference to the rich heritage of the mining in Glenbuck and surrounding area.



