

● Light Blue Route – Balvenie Pillar Path

Start point: Glen Tilt Car Park

Distance: mile (1.6km)

Follow the Light Blue way-markers ●●●●●●

From the Glen Tilt car park follow the light blue waymarkers towards the river. The path then turns to head north east although it is well worth a detour to admire the view from the Grotto down to the clear water of the river Tilt.

As you follow the path up towards the main Glen Tilt track it is worth keeping an eye out for our native red squirrels who can often be seen in this area. From the main track you'll find a turn off to join what would have been the old road leading to the pillar.

This quiet woodland is home to buzzards, sparrowhawk, tawny owls and roe deer and brown hare can be seen. At the top of the small hill is the pillar itself, which marks the spot of the last public hanging on the estate in 1630. There are views over farmland and towards the Munro Schiehallion. From the pillar follow the path downhill along the fence and turn left at the bottom of the steps. Take care on the road as you return to the car park.



Balvenie Pillar Path



Banvie Burn

Visitors' Code

For a safe and enjoyable visit, please remember that Atholl Estates is a place of work. Be considerate towards other users of the countryside and follow the

Scottish Outdoor Access Code

- Take responsibility for your own actions.
- Enjoy the outdoors, but take care and watch out for natural hazards Care for our environment
- Please take your litter home. Litter and food scraps attract scavengers
- Guard against fire at all times
- Please don't feed our farm animals or animals in the wild
- Please leave wild flowers and plants for everyone to enjoy
- Please keep your dog under close control and do not allow it to harass wild animals Help us to work safely and effectively
- Dog waste bags are available at reception and there are bins at the Glen Tilt car park and along the Riverside walk
- Follow advice given on signs about forestry and farming operations
- Do not block gateways or access tracks – park in designated areas
- Keep dogs on a lead or under close control in fields or hill sheep areas to avoid distressing farm stock

Atholl Estates Information Centre

Visit the information centre for information on local wildlife, estate management, and what to see and do in the area. The centre is in Blair Atholl, opposite the Blair Castle Caravan Park and next to the fish and chip shop. It is open daily from Easter to October.

Hillphone

If you plan to head into the hills during your visit you can find information on hillwalking and access during the stag stalking season – 12th August to 20th October – please phone our Hillphone on 01796 481740 or check the notice in the Glen Tilt Car Park. The information is updated by 9.00am every day

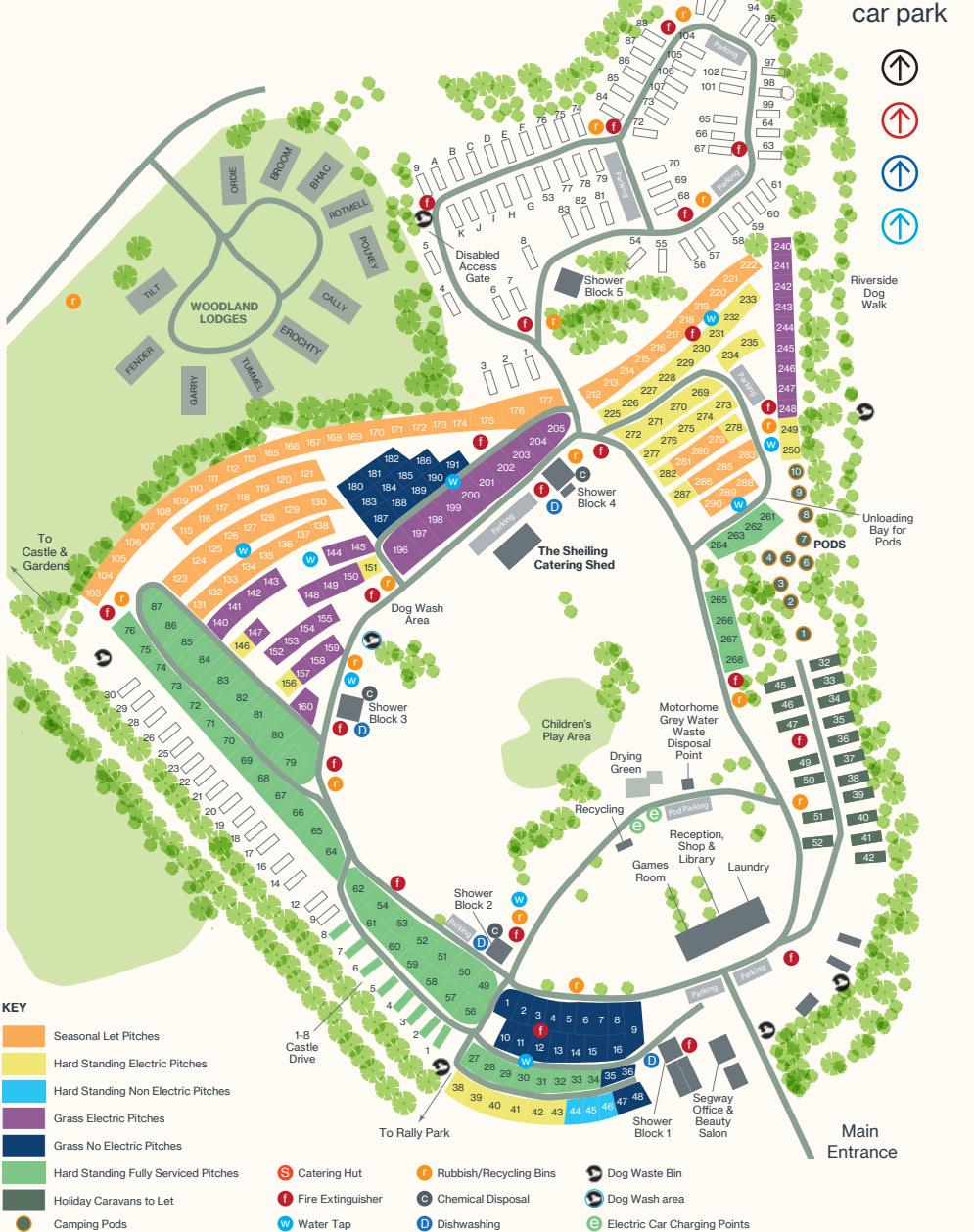


Red Squirrel



Walks Accessible from Blair Castle Caravan Park

Leading to Red Squirrel Trail, Banvie Burn, Balvenie Pillar & Woodend Walk





## ● Red Route – Red Squirrel Walk

**Start point: Glen Tilt Car Park**

Distance: 1 mile (1.6km)

Follow the RED way-markers



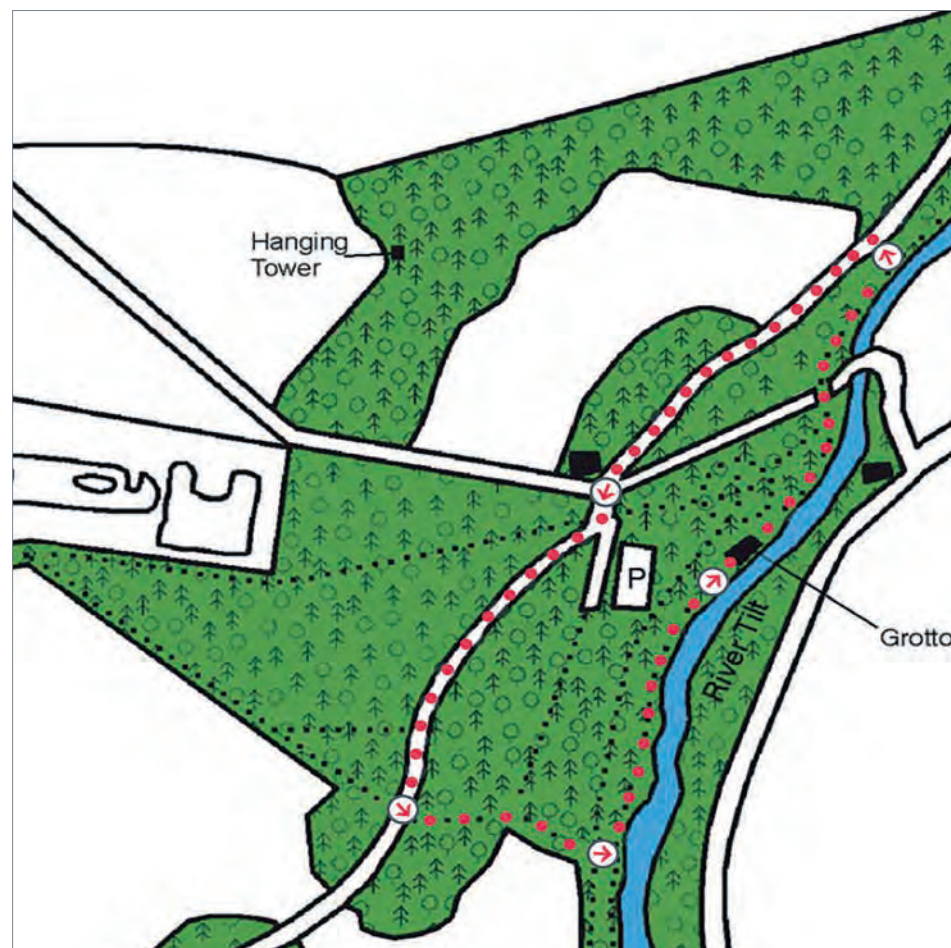
This part of Atholl Estates is one of the best places for seeing red squirrels. There are lots of them about and they are used to seeing people and dogs. We have no grey squirrels at Blair Atholl (yet!).

To spot red squirrels look up in the trees and also listen for the scratching sounds of their claws on the bark. If it seems to be raining bits of pine cone, this is a sure sign that a squirrel is above, having a feed.

The best time to see squirrels here is in late summer and autumn when the adults are active, hoarding food for the winter, and the youngsters are out and about. If you see 2 or 3 squirrels chasing each other around in the trees they are probably young ones. Baby squirrels are called kittens and most will not survive their first winter.

As you follow the walk, you can see other signs of squirrel activity. Piles of cone cores – the discarded middle of a cone, like an apple core, are found below branches where squirrels have been feeding. They pull the outer scales off the cone to get at the small but nutritious seeds inside. When they have finished, they just throw it away – watch out for your head! Their favourite cones are Scots pine, Norway spruce and larch. Squirrels also like to eat seeds, nuts (look for split hazelnut shells), fungi, sap wood from trees and the occasional bird's egg.

You can see a lot of squirrel dreys (homes) on this walk, especially on the first section. Dreys look like birds' nests, but are round rather than cup-shaped, with one or two small entrance holes. Red squirrels are not such skilled builders as birds, so their dreys are usually built right next to the trunk of a tree to give some extra support. Squirrels usually have one main drey for their young and some others for shelter which may be shared with neighbours.



Red Squirrel Walk

## ● Black Route – Banvie Burn Walk

**Start point: Glen Tilt Car Park**

Distance: 3 miles (4.8km) or shortcut 2 miles (3.2km)

Follow the BLACK way-markers



From the Glen Tilt Car Park, follow the road up to Old Blair. At the crossroads head straight on and then left into the woods with the Banvie Burn below you.

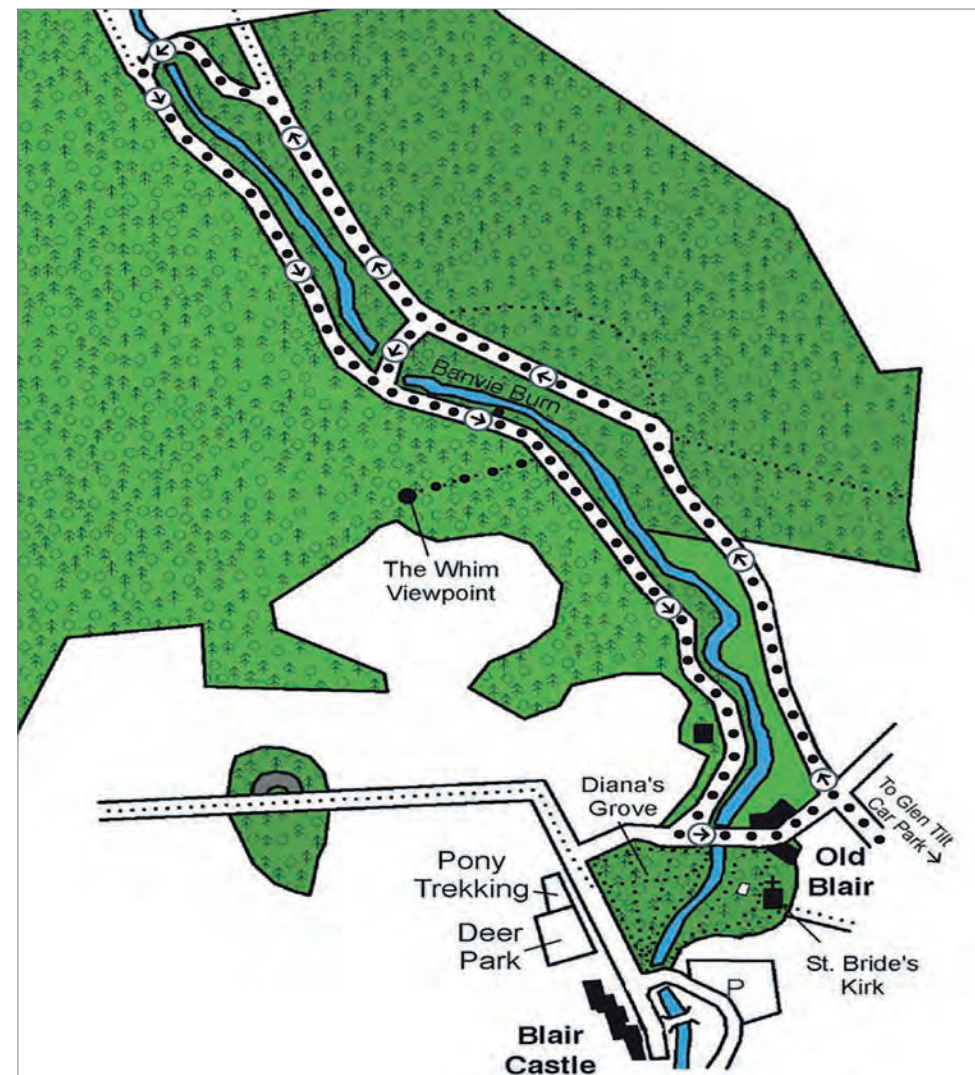
Rhododendron bushes hug the side of the steep gorge. These were planted beside the path in the 18th century, and have since spread vigorously. In other parts of this wood we have recently felled the rhododendron to allow more light and space for other plants and trees to grow.

At the first bridge you can either take a shortcut across to the other side or continue up to the second bridge. After heavy rain you can hear the crashing of boulders being moved by the rushing water running under the bridge - known for this reason as the rumbling bridge.

At the second bridge you get a good view out to the open moor above. This view is gloriously purple with heather in July and August. Red deer can often be seen right at the edge of the wood here in winter, sheltering from the bad weather. In summer the deer herd will be grazing away out on the high tops.

On your return, the detour to the Whim is very worthwhile. This folly was built in 1761 to give an eye-catching view up from the castle. The view from the Whim back to the castle and beyond to Ben Vrackie is also lovely. The parkland and designed landscape around Blair Castle stands out very well from here. Much of this landscape was created in the 18th century by the second Duke of Atholl.

At the road, turn left back across the burn, and head back to the car park.



Banvie Burn Walk

## ● Blue Route – Woodend Walk

**Start point: Glen Tilt Car Park**

Distance: 4.5 miles (7.2km)

Follow the BLUE way-markers



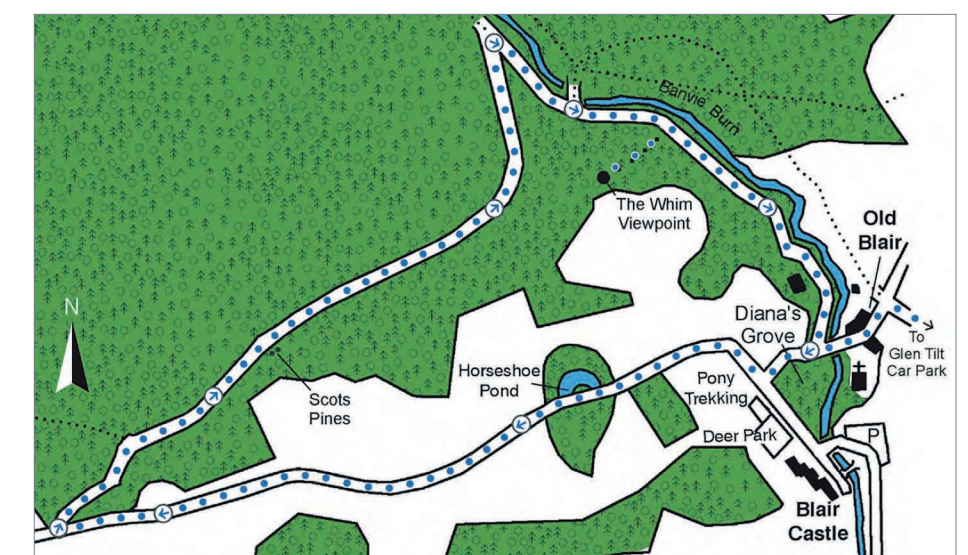
From the Glen Tilt Car Park, follow the road up the hill to Old Blair. At the crossroads turn left and follow the road round to the right, past Diana's Grove, a collection of exotic conifers with some of the tallest trees in Britain.

At the pony trekking centre turn right along the track. The highland ponies are very strong and sure-footed – very useful for both trekking and deer stalking (the ponies carry the deer carcass off the hill). They have a thick coat allowing them to live outside all year round.

Walking along the West Drive you get a lovely view of the parkland around Blair Castle. We have recently planted a lot of new parkland trees to replace the old and dying ones. Not only do these trees look attractive, they also provide important shelter for the farm animals in the fields.

Entering the woodland, the route takes you uphill. Gaps in the trees reveal striking glimpses of the valley below and Ben Vrackie straight ahead. Much of the woodland here is larch – a deciduous conifer losing its needles in winter. The path is carpeted with soft, golden needles in the autumn. The larch tree has an indelible link with the Dukes of Atholl and Atholl Estates. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the second and fourth dukes were the first to plant larch commercially for timber, rather than just for decoration. The hybrid larch ( a hybrid between European and Japanese larch) was also developed on Atholl Estates, near Dunkeld, and is the main larch species used in forestry today. The timber from larch is strong and extremely water resistant.

After reaching the top of the hill, you follow the tumbling Banvie Burn back to the road, and so to the car park.



Woodend Walk



Horseshoe Pond