



## Stage One: Kilchattan Bay Circular (5 miles, 8km)

### Route Notes:

- At the very end of the road through Kilchattan Bay village there is a turning area for buses and a parking area. Here a carved sandstone pillar marks the Start of the West Island Way
- The footpath is clear and follows the rugged coastline down to the south end of Bute. Take extra care where the rocky path is narrow and close to the shoreline – this is the most rugged section you will encounter on the West Island Way.
- You will pass below a rocky outcrop known as the ‘Hawk’s Neb’ – still an impressive sight but it’s neb (beak) was much reduced by rockfall in recent years.
- Soon you will see the lighthouse of Rubh’ an Eun and Glencallum Bay coming into view.
- Follow the path around the edge of the bay to the far side. Looking up, a marker shows where the path climbs up. At the top, pause to look back and enjoy the view of the bay, the lighthouse and across to Wee Cumbrae.
- Follow the curving path for about half a mile and you will reach the southernmost part of the walk. You will have a fine view of Arran and of Holy Isle in Lamlash Bay.



- The path now turns right to reveal Loch na Leighe below. The path takes you downhill and to the left of this peaceful little loch and heads in the direction of The Plan Farm, but turning right onto a vehicle track before reaching the farm. Follow the signpost to take you up to the higher ground, looking down on the Farm.



- Walk a little further and the ruin of St Blane's Chapel can be seen, sitting high on a mound and surrounded by native trees. Take time to go into the Chapel to learn its story and feel the atmosphere of this special place – the gate is at the far side of the mound. What we see of the Chapel today owes much to the restoration work carried out by the 3rd Marquess of Bute and his architect Robert Schulz.
- Turn to the north end of the St Blane's site to pick up the signs to where the path leads you to the farm track that will take you uphill. After passing the ruined township of Kingaven, follow the track up the hill to go through a bridle gate leading to a field. Turn right to walk downhill to a small bridge at the bottom.
- Head uphill in the direction of the summit of the hill called Suidhe Chatain.
- Stop at an Interpretation 'Swing' Post will tell you about the ruined township of Branser.
- The West Island Way path will lead you to the right, skirting around the summit. But it is well worth making the short diversion (uphill to the Ordnance Survey trig point marker) to enjoy the view of the red sands of Kilchattan Bay and to the Firth of Clyde beyond.
- Rejoin the main path and head downhill to the Suidhe Wood and the stepped path that will take you back into the village of Kilchattan Bay.
- If you are continuing to Stage 2, turn left after the steps and follow the path that will take you out of Kilchattan Bay along the back gardens of the houses.
- If you are ending your walk at Kilchattan Bay, after the stepped path take the passage between the village houses that will take you back to the seafront and to the Car Park and Start of the Way.
- **You have now reached the end of Stage One.**