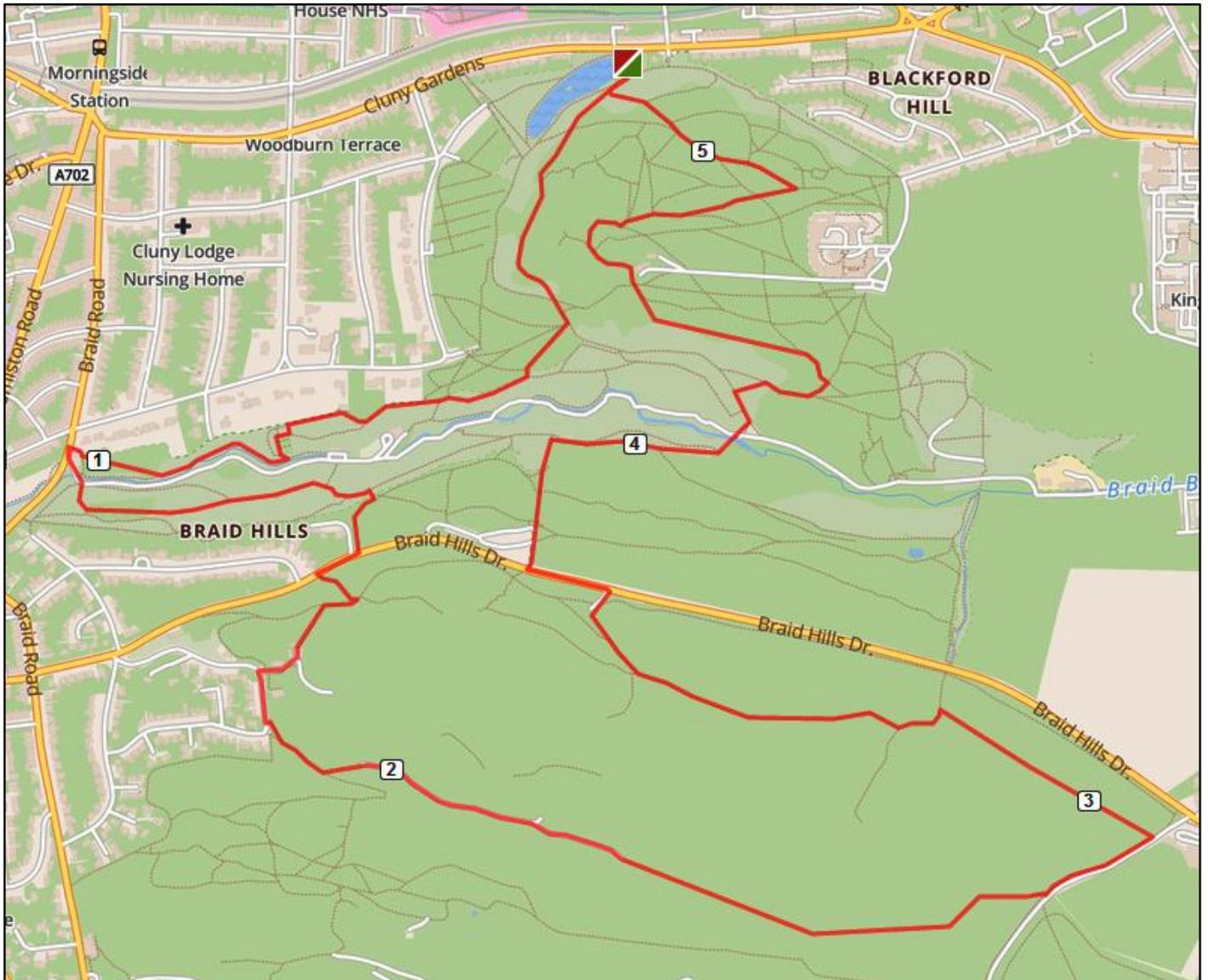


Tour de Braids

A 5.16-mile long, circular walking tour of the Braids using lesser known byways, back-alleys and backwaters. Much ascent (345 m) and descent.



Map and elevation drawn using mapOmeter



Starting from the gazebo at the east end of Blackford Pond, exit by the metal gate, by heading towards Blackford Hill. Turn right along the broad path. After a

few tens of paces find a sturdy set of steps leading, slightly left, diagonally upwards. Part way up, ignore more steps leading back to the left. Keep ahead. When the primary steps level out, traverse along beneath Blackford Hill. Purple-coloured, fine-grained, andesite lavas, formed about 410 million years ago in the Devonian Period, are well exposed at the left of the path. Soon, drop down to regain the main path. Keep left and in 70 paces find a gateway through the wall, on the right, into the grassy Midmar Paddock.

Follow the path half-left to discover an entrance into the Hermitage of Braid Woods. Step through to reach a T-junction. Take the track to the right, in trees, the paddock on your right. Keep on, contour alongside the back of garden fencing, and high above the Hermitage House. Pass through a stone arch (into the old walled garden), to soon arrive at the Dovecot (which housed 2000 nest boxes). Drop down in front of the Dovecot and then descend steep steps to the Garden area. Pass a stone wall and turn right, upstream, with the Braid Burn on your left. Steps lead up and down. Move right into the Wild Flower Meadow [1-mile marker on map]. Aim for the far right-hand corner where a narrow lane is found. Pass through it, to step out onto Braid Road. Turn left to the Park Entrance. The lodge was formerly the Morningside Tollhouse (situated at the site of the Braid Church). After the abolition of road tolls in Scotland in 1883, it was re-erected as a lodge.

Re-enter the park. Cross over the Braid Burn. Side-paths immediately lead off to the right. Take the leftmost. The path rises and undulates along in a downstream direction. Follow it through woods. It slowly but surely rises up the side of the Glen. In due course the path reaches metal railings. Step through into the field above. Here, go sharp-right alongside, and up, the field edge to meet Braid Hills Drive. Easily clamber up and onto the footpath. Turn right for 90 paces to find, on the opposite side of the road, an entrance way onto the Braids. Beware of fast moving traffic.

Rises diagonally to the left to reach the bridleway. Turn right for 90 paces. A narrow path angles up to the left. Take this as it climbs evermore steeply to arrive at the Maintenance Yard of the Braids Golf Club. Pass through the yard. Bear right, then left along Braid Hills Approach. Pass the Golf Club. Beyond, turn left through a gateway which gives access back onto the Braids. The left hand path climbs steadily to reach a good track which contours beneath Buckstone Snab. The track winds along, above the golf course fairways and below the main Braids Ridge. A detour could be made to the summit of the Braids, from here [2-mile marker on map] if desired. Otherwise, keep right of the fairways, sometimes on

paths through the gorse scrub. Maintain height at the 6th tee. Trees are eventually seen ahead. Aim for the right-hand corner of the end of a shelterbelt.

When the gorse ends, the boundary track is seen over to the right. But, press on ahead and slightly left to pass below the 7th green. A footpath heads into the right-hand edge of the shelterbelt trees. It forks, but all branches lead through to an open grassy area not used for golf. Aim for a coniferous grove, in the woods, at the far left-hand end. Just before, step through and out, to the left, to emerge on the fairway near the 1st tee. Head directly for the Wee Braids Golf Course Shop, seen ahead, by passing to the right of the 1st tee and behind the 9th green. Pass beside the shop. Turn left, along the red-cinder path. The golf driving range is to your right. On nearing the buildings of the driving range leave the cinder path to pass around the back of the 11th green and into the woods opposite.

Walk parallel to Braid Hills Drive by following footpaths just inside the woodlands and alongside the fairway [3-mile marker on map]. In due course reach the cross-track coming up from the Howe Dean. Go left, the track then bends right. Take a branch track to the right, passing a low building. Keep on the track, which is the old road across the Braid Hills. Higher ground (where Devonian trachytic lavas are nicely exposed) lies on the right, with the 8th tee and and fairway to your left. When the track forks, near a green, keep to the right. Glimpse and aim for metal fencing that you can pass through to gain a short, scruffy road out onto Braid Hills Drive. Cross with extreme care onto the far pavement. Follow it to the left to the Lang Linn. Go straight down the Lang Linn. At the trees bear right, diagonally down to the wooden 'Scout' Bridge. Cross over the burn, climb up the far steps and follow the path up to the left.

Soon a path leads right. Level at first, then rising through a half-rocky defile, it climbs to an open grassy area. Angle up and back to the left through gorse. Pass a lonely seat (with good views back to the Braid Hills). Continue up and left to bypass Corbie's Crag (a superb example of a glacial crag-and-tail feature). Ahead mount a second tump (excellent viewpoint and seat). Turn and head for home by walking towards the radio mast. Do not descend the steep steps on the left.

Instead follow alongside the left of fencing on a narrow path to pass beneath the summit of Blackford Hill. As the slope eases, turn right to the summit.

Descend in the general direction of the Observatory, but keep left on a level path. Three quarters of the way to the building a wide, grassy slope drops away steeply to the left. Near the bottom of the slope follow a path to traverse left for a short distance and to re-gain the track used on the outward journey. Turn right down the sturdy steps to return to Blackford Pond.