

Holyrood Park: Self Guided Walks

HELP US KEEP THE PARK SPECIAL

Historic Scotland and the Rangers need your help to take care of this dramatic landscape in the heart of the city. Camping, fires and barbecues are not permitted anywhere in the park. Please leave your rubbish in the bins provided in the car parks and at park entrances.

BEFORE YOU START

The Historic Scotland Ranger Service recommend sturdy footwear with good grips for walking in Holyrood Park. A few minutes walk can take you from urban pavement to a more rugged landscape, with some uneven ground, slippery surfaces and sheer drops.

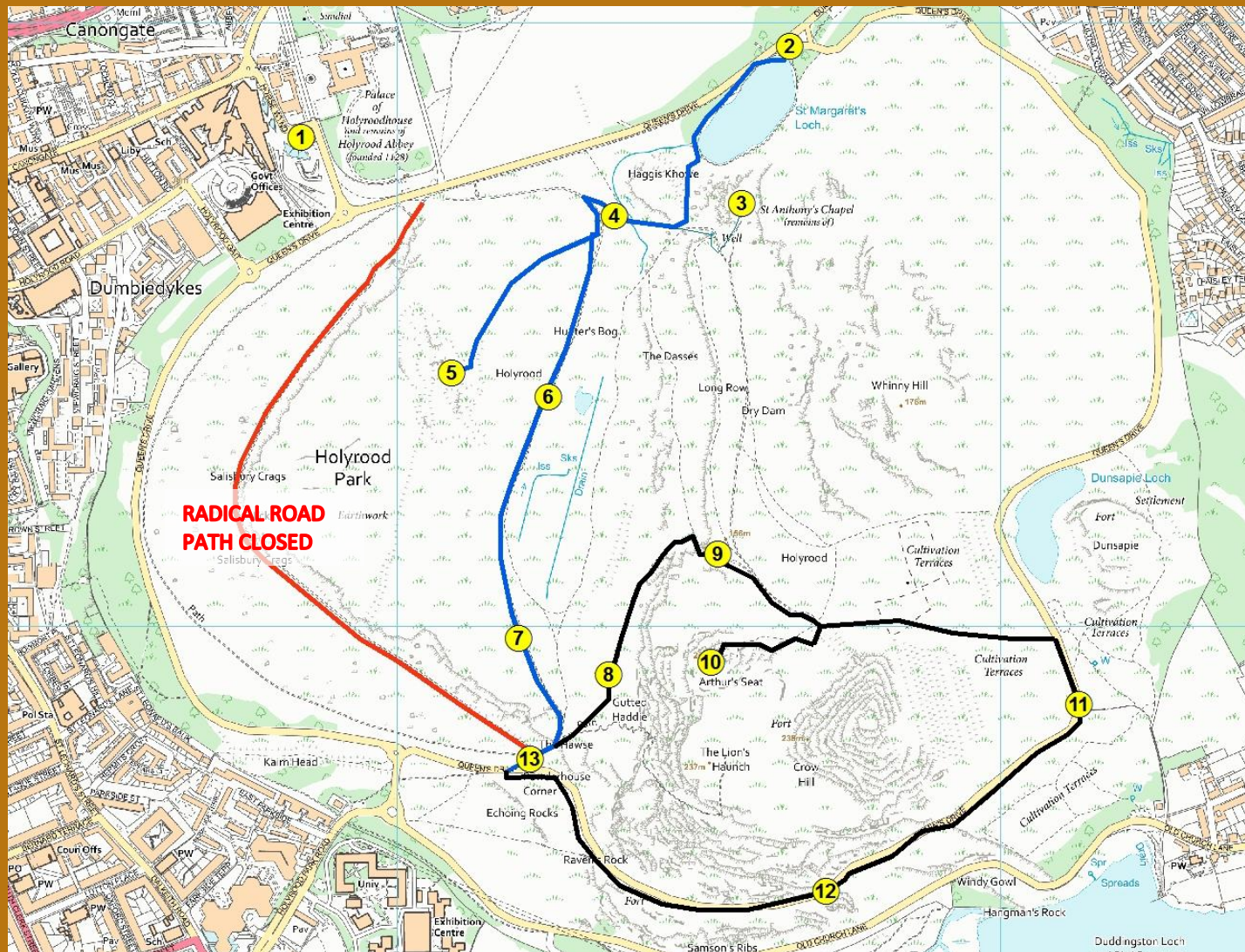
WALKING ROUTES

BLUE ROUTE - 2.5 KM - 1.5 HOURS

BLACK CIRCUIT - 3 KM - 1.5 HOURS

RADICAL ROAD PATH CLOSED

 WAY POINTS (SEE OVERLEAF)



HOLYROOD PARK SELF GUIDED WALKS: WAY POINTS

1. A fine Victorian building in its own right, the Historic Scotland Ranger Service visitor centre is a good starting point for any visit to Holyrood Park. As well as maps and leaflets there are also displays about the history, geology and wildlife of the park.

2. Queen Victoria's husband Albert built this loch as part of improvements to the park during her reign. It now provides a home for a large flock of non-breeding Mute Swan as well as other water birds such as Greylags, Coot, Moorhen, Tufted Duck and Mallard.

3. St Anthony of Egypt was a hermit and one of the earliest monks. He is considered the founder and father of organised monasticism. This chapel, dedicated to his name, was built in the early 1400s. Records show that the Pope gave money for its repair in 1426.

4. During the 1745 Jacobite rising the Highland army, fearful of artillery bombardment from Edinburgh castle, advanced into Edinburgh around the south side of the city. In order to reach Holyrood Palace it's said that Bonnie Prince Charlie rode down through Hunter's Bog, and paused in an emotional moment as he finally set his eyes on the ancient family home of the Stuarts.

5. 350 million years ago this part of Scotland was down near the equator and covered by tropical lagoons. You can still see evidence of the water today as ripple marks on the sedimentary rocks.

6. In 1564 Mary Queen of Scots ordered that Hunter's Bog be dammed to form an artificial loch. A banquet was laid out beside it to celebrate the marriage of two of her courtiers, and for entertainment they were treated to a re-enactment of a naval engagement that took place during the siege of Leith. You can still see the remains of the dam near the north end of the bog today.

7. Despite 8000 years of human habitation in this area the name "Hunter's Bog" may be more modern. John Hunter was Treasurer of the Canongait and Keeper of the park from 1566-67. Mary, Queen of Scots, granted him a 19 year lease of this area, then called Grundles Myre, in return for draining the King's Meadow (roughly where Dynamic Earth stands today). So, in return for draining a bog, John Hunter was granted...a bog!

8. In 1778 soldiers from the Seaforth highlanders mutinied over rumours that were to be sent abroad. They headed for Arthur's Seat, where the public supplied them with food, water and a piper. The piper played and paced this path, now known as Piper's Walk. Later they were persuaded they wouldn't be sent abroad and set sail for Guernsey. However, in 1782, they were sent to India where many died on the journey's there and home.

9. An Iron Age hill fort and an old field boundary, stand out in the snow in a view west across the park.

10. In 1836 some schoolboys were playing just below the summit of Arthur's Seat, when they found a small cave sealed by slate. Inside were 17 small coffins, and inside each one was a small figure carved and dressed as if to represent an actual person. There is no clear explanation as to what they were for; some suggest it was to do with black magic, others that they may have been carved to represent the victims of Burke and Hare!

11. From 4,000 to 2,500 years ago more and more people arrived in Scotland. Known as 'Beaker' people because of the type of pottery they made and used, they also brought with them the knowledge of how to farm the land for crops. They used the surrounding forest for wood and cleared land for farming, sometimes using areas of fertile soil on hill sides to create a terraced field. An example can be seen here on the east side of Crow Hill.

12. The Mute Swans of Duddingston Loch were once the subject of a legal dispute. In 1688 the Duchess of Lauderdale claimed ownership of the swans on the basis that they had been introduced onto the loch by her late husband. Sir James Dick of Prestonfield said that he owned the swans because they were on the loch that formed part of his land. When the court ruled against him, Sir James turned all of the rest of the swans off the loch!

13. Built from fire and carved by ice, Arthur's Seat is part of the remains of a 350 million year old volcano. This view shows the Lion's Head on the left and the Lion's Haunch on the right, the remains of two ancient volcanic vents.



Images 5,9 & 13 courtesy of Graham Checkley



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