

Bonjour, Salam, Hola, Namasté, Nĩ hĩu, Guten Tag....hello! Welcome to Heriot-Watt University!

We want you to enjoy not only your study time here at Heriot-Watt University, but also take advantage of the many opportunities available in the local community and beyond to meet new people and make new friends, and hopefully feel more at home.

The local villages of Balerno, Currie, Juniper Green and Colinton are thriving communities with a huge variety of events, activities and organisations for you and your new University friends to participate in. Listed below are only a few of these, with links to help you familiarise yourself with what goes on.

Countryside Activities

If you are interested in countryside activities, here are a few of what is available locally. Always remember, however, Scotland's weather can be wet, cool and changeable, so always wear appropriate clothing and footwear.

We have the wonderful [Pentland Hills Regional Park](#) on our doorstep, where you can spend an hour on a gentle walk round Harlaw Reservoir, or, for the more energetic, spend a day walking or mountain biking in the hills. Find their map [here](#).



Look out for a wide range of wildlife, particularly at **Bavelaw Marsh Nature Reserve**, a haven for bird migration.

- Car parking is available at Harlaw or Thriepmuir Reservoirs, with access on to the hills from both Reservoirs.
- Thriepmuir Reservoir is also accessible by bus (take **Lothian Regional Transport (LRT) 45** bus from the campus to Currie Post Office, cross the main road for **LRT 44** bus to the bus terminus at Balerno. There is then about a mile of uphill road walking to reach the Thriepmuir car park.)
- Wheelchair access is available at Harlaw car park.

Within walking distance of the University campus is the [Water of Leith](#) riverside walk. This is a lovely 13-mile path along the river all the way from Balerno to the River Forth Estuary at Leith (you don't need to do the whole distance, there are many access and exit points all the way along!). The section of path through Balerno, Currie, Juniper Green and Colinton used to be the railway line which served the many mills along the river. At Slateford, you can join the [Union Canal](#) which will take you in to the city centre in one direction, and all the way to Glasgow in the other direction!

You could spend a few pleasant hours by the river by walking or taking the **LRT 45** bus up to Currie Post Office and accessing the Walk at Currie Kirk. Then walk east through Juniper Green Village to Colinton Village (about 3 miles), explore Colinton and then get the **LRT 45** bus in Colinton back to the campus. Be aware the **45** bus does not operate on a Sunday. Or you could go further and walk all the way down to Slateford (another 2 miles) and get the **LRT 34** bus back to the campus. Lothian Regional Transport has a mobile app which you can find on their website <http://lothianbuses.com/>.

The path is used by walkers, joggers, cyclists and horse riders, and certain stretches are accessible for wheelchairs.



Do you cycle to the campus? If you live locally, are you aware there are dedicated [cycle routes](#) you could use to access the campus. Use the Water of Leith Path (Cycle Route 75)/local roads from Balerno, Currie, Juniper Green or Colinton down through Currie to the Campus, or from the west side of Edinburgh, access the Union Canal Path (Cycle Route 754) all the way to Hermiston Village/Campus.

Feeling less energetic? Spend some time with friends or family exploring the University Campus, which is a beautiful campus at any time of the year. There are many [lovely walks](#) within the campus grounds, with picnic areas where you could have a leisurely lunch on a sunny day.

TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT

Feeling too lazy to go off-campus? Clear away the cobwebs by taking a [short walk or jog](#) around the grounds. There is plenty of space for families to let the kids run free! It is a beautiful campus to explore at any time of the year, and there are five dedicated [Campus Trails](#).

Are you here with your family? Heriot-Watt Sports Centre runs [football coaching](#) for children, as well as [weekly activities](#) for children throughout school holidays.

[Heriot-Watt University Student Association](#) can put you in touch with volunteer organisations – a great way to be involved in the community, good for your CV too!



Do you have an interest in horses, or have special skills working with disabled children and adults? Perhaps you would like to help at the local [Balerno Riding for the Disabled](#) Group

Or become a member of the local [Rotary Club](#) who fundraise for local, national and international causes.

Heriot Watt has a [Choir and Orchestra](#) and if you are interested in this you should contact Steve King, Musician in Residence. However, there is also a local choir group in Balerno called the [Pentland Singers](#) who meet and perform locally.



There is also a [Folk Music Club](#) in Balerno, and Balerno also hosts a [Music Festival](#) in the Autumn of each year.



Farmers Markets and Community Markets are held throughout the year in the local villages of [Balerno](#) and [Juniper Green](#). A wide variety of fresh produce and other food is offered for sale.

- Balerno - 2nd Saturday of each month in Main Street.
- Juniper Green - 4th Saturday of each month in the Dental Practice Car Park on the main road.

- Access by bus or car. (Walk or take the **LRT 45** up to Currie Post Office and then get the **LRT 44** bus the short distance to Juniper Green, or cross the main road and get the **LRT 44** bus up to Balerno)

How about an evening out at the cinema? There is an Odeon cinema complex at Wester Hailes, just to the east of the University, Visit their [website](#) and to find out what is currently showing.

However, a quieter and less expensive option would be to visit the [Balerno Village Screen](#), a new initiative in Balerno Village Hall which shows most major films.



Why not try a completely new learning experience - learn to play the guitar, relax with Tai Chi or Yoga, try some new cookery or dance skills. A wide range of [recreational classes](#) are offered at our three **Community Schools**, in [Balerno](#), [Currie](#) and [Wester Hailes](#). These Schools also have public swimming pools and usually offer children's swimming lessons. Classes start in September, and run over three terms – usually September-December, January-April, May-June.

While you all probably download your reading material electronically, and use the University's Library, there are **public libraries** in [Currie](#) and [Balerno](#) which provide more than just lending books – Currie Library, for instance, has a community room for hire, display/exhibition space for public use, gaming consoles, local history displays from the Local History Society. Both Libraries have Book Reading Groups for both adults and children.

Interested in sculpture? - [Jupiter Artland](#) is a contemporary sculpture garden in the grounds of Bonnington House, on the outskirts of west Edinburgh, just a few miles from the University (only open May – September).

- Access by car or bus (**First Bus 27**, from Hermiston Village). If arriving by car, on-line pre-booking may be required.

Or do you have a head for heights? - [Ratho International Climbing Centre](#) is a fun activity for the more adventurous. It has an outdoor clothing shop and a Soft Play Centre for children.

- Access by car only.