



WALKING

in and around

Dalbeattie & Colvend



The natural place to walk





The Dalbeattie and Colvend area is one of the most beautiful and diverse in Dumfries & Galloway with scenery ranging from forest to woodland and from saltmarsh to rocky coast. The area is also home to the town of Dalbeattie, the picturesque coastal villages of Rockcliffe and Kippford, and the popular Sandyhills beach.

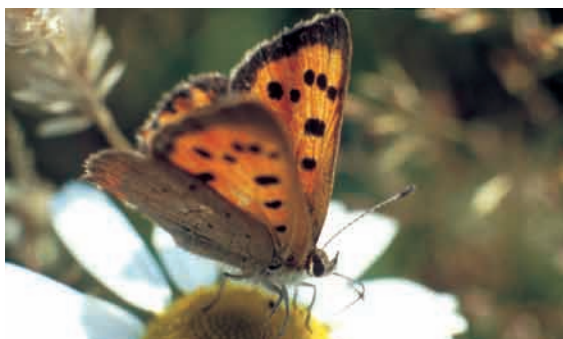
The variety of habitats support an abundance of wildlife. Red squirrels are a common sight, colourful dragonflies skim the surface of lochs and birdlife abounds. Look out for sparrowhawks, peregrine falcon perching on rocky outcrops and the many waders such as oystercatcher feeding on the mudflats. The area is particularly renowned for its rich diversity of butterfly species including the small copper, pearl bordered fritillary and purple hairstreak. Plant highlights include the shimmering carpets of bluebells in May and the tapestries of tiny coastal flowers such as English stonecrop and birds foot trefoil during June and July.

Those interested in archaeology can visit the Iron Age fort sites of Mote of Mark and Castle Point on the coast near Rockcliffe.

The town of Dalbeattie provides a good range of services and Rockcliffe has been a choice holiday village since Victorian times.

THE WALKS

- 1 Rounall Wood8**
- 2 Dalbeattie Forest Easy Access Trail
(and other waymarked routes)..... 10**
- 3 Dalbeattie to Colvend Trail 12**
- 4 The Jubilee Path 16**
- 5 The Muckle Walk 18**
- 6 Castle Point20**
- 7 Rockcliffe to Sandyhills Coastal Walk ..22**



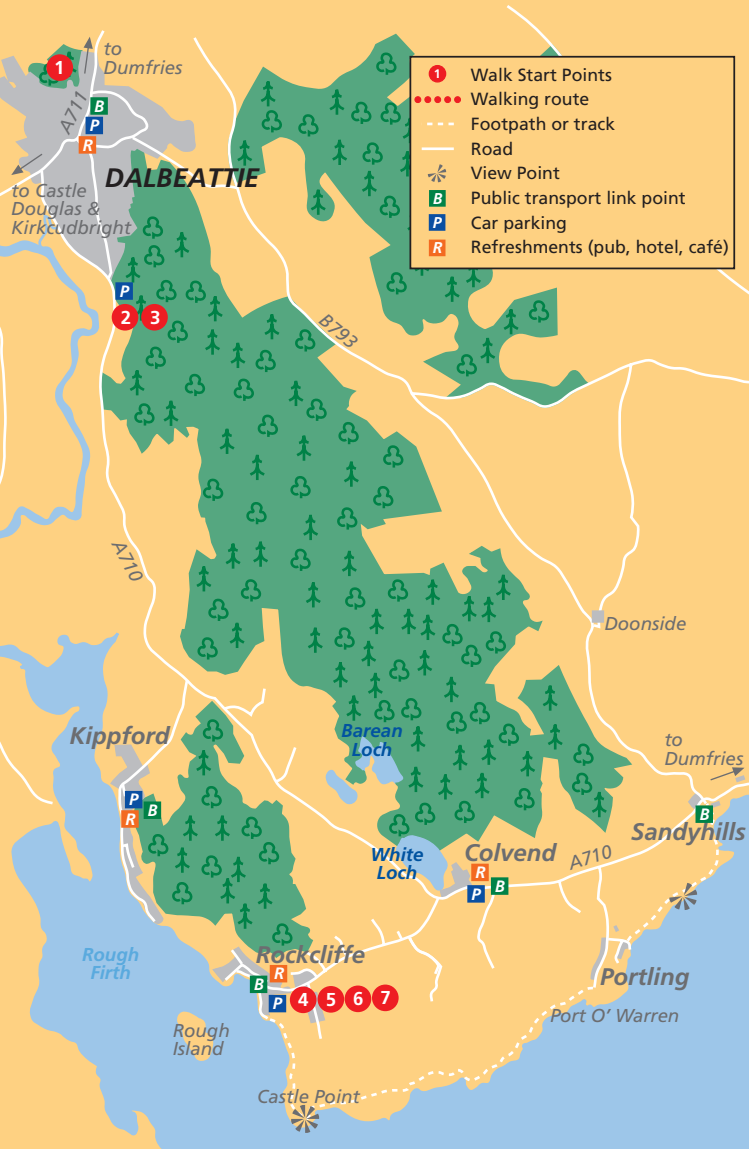
Small copper

Route information

- A brief description, approximate distances and times are given for each route.
- Paths are graded for people of reasonable mobility as easy, moderate, strenuous or very strenuous.
- Accessibility by wheelchair is indicated on appropriate routes.
- Please follow the guidelines given for dogs.
- As with all walks, it is a good idea to take weatherproof clothing and stout footwear.

The orange covered OS Explorer 1:25 000 map (No 313) covers this area in detail.

Location Maps





Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work.

- Keep dogs under close control at all times.
- Respect farm livestock, crops and machinery.
- Take your litter home with you.
- Take care on country roads.
- Guard against risk of fire.

Take particular care on the shore – the Solway Firth can be deceptive, with fast tides, strong currents and deep hidden channels.





Bluebells

Circular woodland path

2km/1.5 miles

Allow 1 hour

Stone path

Easy

Stout shoes recommended

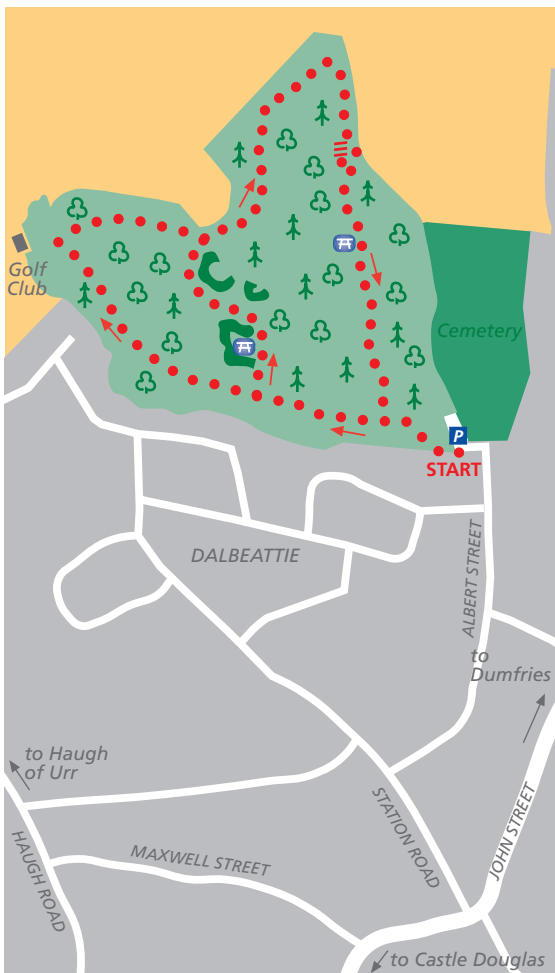
Rounall Wood is a quiet haven on the outskirts of Dalbeattie with a network of paths giving opportunities for a quiet stroll, a picnic or a place for children to explore.

START from the centre of Dalbeattie, travel up Station Road and turn right into Albert Street. Follow the road straight ahead and you will come to the car park and start of the Rounall Wood paths. For the gentlest uphill gradients, follow the paths in a clockwise direction. The route is well surfaced and picnic sites are provided along the way.

Look out for woodland creatures such as roe deer which often graze amongst the trees. Overhead you may hear the distinctive 'mewing' of buzzards as they soar on thermal air currents on warm days.

An early morning visit to Rounall Wood in springtime will reward you with a dawn chorus of woodland birds and you may be lucky enough to see a red squirrel.

In the evening, look out for badgers foraging for worms or beetles in the undergrowth. Bats too can be seen at dusk swooping around the tree tops catching small insects.



Red squirrel



Circular woodland path

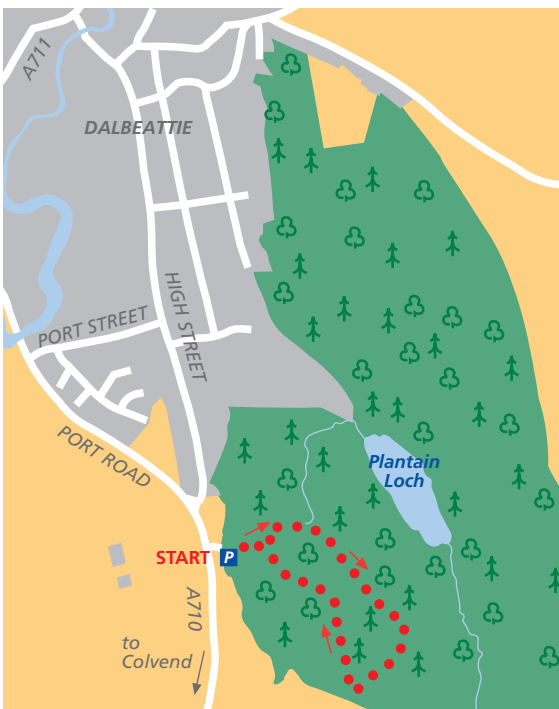
2 km/1.5 miles

Allow 1 hour

Stone path

Easy

This is an all ability trail



START from the centre of Dalbeattie, follow the High Street south to meet the A710 and turn left towards Colvend. After a very short distance you will see the car park, picnic area and the start of all the Dalbeattie forest paths.

The Easy Access Trail was created in 2001 to allow all ability access to the forest. The path was established by the Dalbeattie Forest Community Partnership, made up of representatives from the local community and agencies such as Forest Enterprise.

The Easy Access Trail follows a varied route through mixed woodland and open clearings and provides ample opportunity to stop and rest along the way. The route is ideal for anyone who has difficulty walking on rough ground, for wheelchair users and for families with pushchairs.

Dalbeattie Forest has been owned by the Forestry Commission since the 1920s and contains a diverse mixture of trees including mature broadleaves and a variety of conifers. The woodland is managed with recreation and wildlife in mind, although commercial forestry operations still need to take place from time to time. Occasionally paths need to be temporarily closed to allow these works to be carried out safely and you are asked to comply with any signing you see on site.

Dalbeattie forest trail





White Loch

Linear path through forest with circular loop to and along the coast

19km/12 miles (return)

Allow a full day, 8 hours

Beaten earth, stone path, tracks and minor roads

Strenuous

Boots or stout shoes recommended

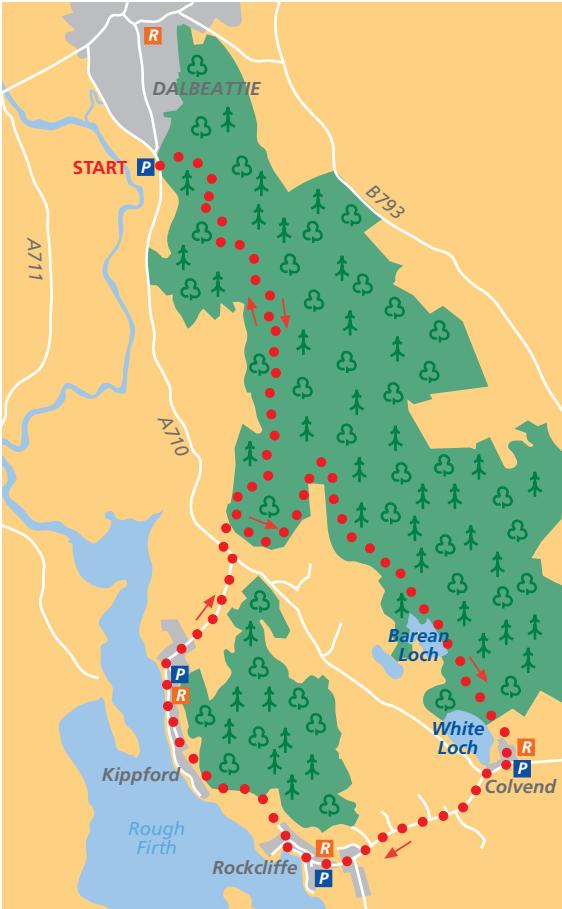
Map OS Explorer Map 313 recommended

START from the centre of Dalbeattie, follow the High Street south to meet the A710 and turn left towards Colvend. After a very short distance turn into the car park and picnic area for Dalbeattie Forest and you will see a sign for the Dalbeattie to Colvend Trail.

Following the waymarkers with the brown band.

These lead you through a mixture of coniferous and broadleaved sections of the forest and those seeking peace and quiet will enjoy the more remote experience of this longer route. Other rewards are the panoramic views of the Urr Valley and surrounding hills which open up on the higher ground along the way.

It will take around 3 hours to reach Colvend.



There is a thriving population of red squirrels in Dalbeattie Forest and on this path you would be unlucky not to see at least one along the way. Look out for the flick of a bushy red tail amongst the trees or a scampering body rushing across the path before you.

At the signposted junction, you have the choice of taking the right track towards Kippford. For the purposes of this description follow the left track towards Colvend.

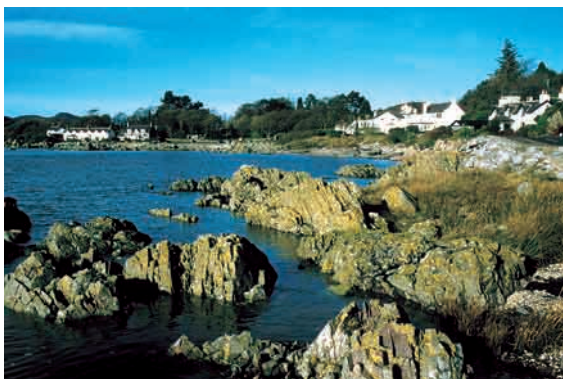
Presently you will pass along the bank of Borean Loch and soon after will gently descend into Colvend village. Turn right past the village hall

and shop, then take the minor road to the left which is clearly marked for Rockcliffe. Take care to be aware of approaching traffic and to step well into the side as the road is narrow.

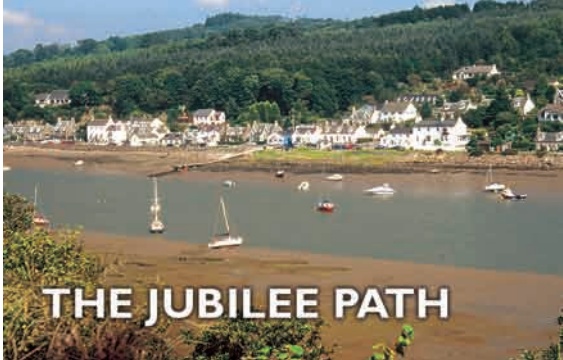
Soon you will see Rockcliffe ahead with its sheltered rocky bay and sandy beach. Much of the land around Rockcliffe is owned and managed by the National Trust for Scotland (NTS). Walk downhill into the village, turn right at the Y-junction (towards the Barons Craig Hotel), turn left at the T-junction, pass the hotel entrance and follow the Jubilee Path to Kippford.

After taking in the delights of Kippford, follow the road which is clearly marked for Dalbeattie. Soon you will come to the junction with the A710 at Barnbarroch Pottery. Turn left and after a short distance you will see a signpost for Dalbeattie leading you back into the forest.

Soon you will come to the signposted junction where you rejoin the track which will take you back towards Dalbeattie and a well earned rest!







Kippford

- Linear coastal path
- 3km/2 miles (return)
- Allow 1 hour 15 minutes
- Beaten earth and stone path
- Easy
- Stout shoes recommended

START from the council car park, turn left down the hill and walk into the village. Turn right at the Y-junction (towards the Barons Craig Hotel), turn left at the T-junction, pass the hotel entrance and follow the Jubilee Path to Kippford.

Rockcliffe first became a popular spot for relaxation and recreation in Victorian times when many of the houses along the seafront were built. The nearby ancient hill forts of Castle Hill and Mote of Mark testify to occupation long before this, with the Mote of Mark once being the centre of the ancient Kingdom of Reghed.

There is a network of minor paths between Rockcliffe and Kippford. Taking a detour onto the top of the Mote of Mark is well worthwhile for an excellent view of the Rough Firth estuary.

The Jubilee Path is the main path between the two



Jubilee Path

villages and was named to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. The land you walk through is managed by NTS for wildlife and recreation and in summer you will see beautiful flowering meadows alongside the path. These are carefully mown and raked to encourage a diverse range of flowers which support the local butterfly population.

Kippford developed as a ship-building centre and today remains a popular base for sailing.

NTS organises many Ranger led guided walks at Rockcliffe during the year. Consult the information boards on site or phone NTS or a Tourist Information Centre for details. Return by the same route or by following any of the minor paths back to Rockcliffe.





Circular coastal and forest path

5km/3 miles

Allow 2 hours

Beaten earth, stone path and tracks

Moderate

Stout shoes or walking boots recommended

START from the council car park, turn left down the hill and walk into the village. Turn right at the Y-junction (towards the Barons Craig Hotel), turn left at the T-junction, pass the hotel entrance and follow the Jubilee Path until you reach the double gate into Mark Hill Wood. This is the start of the Muckle Walk which is indicated by blue waymarker posts.

The sheltered forest paths and tracks here are popular basking spots for reptiles, which need the heat of the sun to warm them and give them energy to move around. Adders are common all along the Galloway coast and are easily identifiable by their dark zig zag markings. Adders are beautiful and shy creatures and often move silently away as they sense you approaching. If you are lucky enough to see one remember that they do have a poisonous bite and so admire them from a safe distance.

The path rises steadily and blue waymarkers will lead you onto the top of the Muckle Hill. Although not a huge ascent, the height is sufficient to give



stunning views out to sea across the estuary and inland towards Dalbeattie. If tide times are right, the top of the Muckle is a good spot to watch sailing boats coming and going at Kippford. The tide in the Rough Firth goes out a long way and boats have only a few hours at high tide to get safely in or out of the estuary. From time to time sailors are caught out and are stranded on the mudbanks until the next high tide.

After descending Mark Hill you will meet the Jubilee Path. Turn left for Rockcliffe.



Rough Firth



View towards Castle Point

Linear coastal path with stiles

3km/2 miles (return)

Allow 1 hour 15 minutes

Minor road, shingle, earth and grass path

Moderate



START from the council car park at the top of Rockcliffe village, follow the pavement downhill and turn left at the coastal path signpost. A quiet road leads to a path along the coast.

Keep an eye out for the sudden darting of a lizard, particularly on sunny pebble beaches. Lizards are completely harmless but very shy and only the sharp eyed will catch a glimpse of one.

Further along the way you will see an old grave set amongst the rocks. Sadly it is the grave of a sailor named Nelson who was shipwrecked and whose body was washed up near Castle Point.

Castle Point was occupied in the Iron Ages and must have been an important site to hold, having such a commanding position at the head of the Rough Firth. On a good day there is a clear view right across the sea to the hills of the Lake District. During the summer you may find wildflowers such as kidney vetch and sheepsbit scabious, whilst in winter, those with binoculars may see red-throated divers and scaup offshore.

Return to Rockcliffe by the same route.



View from Castle Point across Rough Firth



Sheepsbit scabious



Sandyhills Bay

Linear coastal path, steep and close to cliffs in places, with steps and stiles

The path goes through fields of farm animals.

19km/12 miles (return)

Allow a full day, 8 hours

Minor road, shingle, earth and grass paths

Strenuous

Walking boots recommended

The Rockcliffe to Sandyhills coastal path has been described as one of the best in Britain, with stunning views across the Solway to Cumbria and the Isle of Man as well as along the Galloway coast.





Cormorant

START from the council car park at the top of Rockcliffe village, head downhill and turn left at the coastal path signpost. Follow the road to its end and follow the path which continues along the coast. The first major landmark is Castle Point about a mile further along. Here there is a topograph point showing landmarks.

From Castle Point and on along the clifftops there are terrific views of nesting seabirds in spring and summer. Fulmar, razorbill, cormorant and peregrine falcon can all be seen perched on rocky ledges or flying along the coast. You will also see a cairn which marks the spot where the crew of a schooner climbed to safety in 1866. Their sinking boat finally went down at Rascarrel.

About 3 miles along the coast from Rockcliffe, the path descends steeply into the hamlet of Port O' Warren. Climb the wall at the stile and turn left along the minor road, until you see the sign for Portling. Follow the road to the right. A short distance further, you will see the sign for the clifftop path on your left.

As you approach Sandyhills you will have an excellent view of the Bay and on towards Southwick.



Sandyhills Bay

Exit the fields through the kissing gate. At the bottom of the wooden steps keep left to the footbridge across the burn.

Crossing the footbridge bear left around the edge of the bay passing the caravan park. Mid way along the beach you will find an exit to the A710.

You can catch a bus on the A710 at Sandyhills if you don't have the energy to walk back to Rockcliffe. Walking on the main road is not recommended. Alternatively retrace your steps – the view is completely different in the opposite direction!





Rough Island

Particular thanks are extended to

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Dalbeattie Initiative

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A Message from the Health Improvement Group
Walking can seriously improve your health & happiness. Enjoy!



WALKING

i n a n d a r o u n d

Dalbeattie & Colvend

FIND OUT MORE...

This booklet is part of a series for walkers and cyclists, covering Dumfries & Galloway.

For further information about public transport, accommodation, eating out, events and attractions contact:

Dumfries & Galloway Tourist Board
t 01387 253862

Dumfries & Galloway Traveline
t 0345 090510

www.dumfriesandgalloway.co.uk

info@dgtd.visitscotland.com

For further information about the history and natural heritage of the area contact:

The National Trust For Scotland
Ranger Service
t 01556 630262

Forest Enterprise Ranger Service
t 01387 247745

Dumfries & Galloway Council
Ranger Service
t 01387 260184