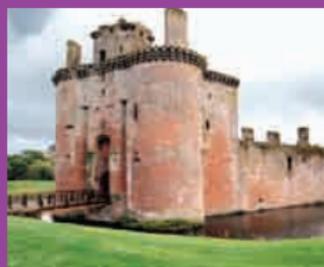


WALKING

in and around

Dumfries & New Abbey



The natural place to walk





Dumfries, known as the Queen of the South, is the commercial heart of Dumfries and Galloway. Lying along the banks of the beautiful River Nith, Dumfries boasts a rich and colourful history; follow in the footsteps of the historical characters that shaped the town.

New Abbey lies five miles south of Dumfries and is steeped in religious history. At its heart stand the impressive sandstone remains of Sweetheart Abbey that almost glow when the sun is casting long shadows.

This leaflet offers a broad taster of walking opportunities around the Nith Estuary, an area of outstanding scenery, part of which has been designated as a National Scenic Area. Take a riverside stroll with historic connections to Robert Burns and Lady Devorgilla, or a town walk incorporating the well planned town parks and The Crichton University Campus. For those in search of a view and a strenuous climb, head for the broad domed granite mass of Criffel, with its promise of a stunning panorama across the Solway to the Lake District Fells. There are excellent forest walks and associated visitor facilities provided by forest Enterprise in the 1,000 hectares of Mabie Forest, lying midway between Dumfries and New Abbey. Discover the fascinating wildlife and historical treasures of Caerlaverock with a visit to the national nature Reserve and an enjoyable woodland walk to the stunning triangular castle.

THE WALKS

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New Abbey with Sweetheart Abbey in background



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 Map



- 1** Walk Start Points
- Walking route
- Alternative walking route
- - - Footpath or track
- Road
- 🌳 View Point
- B** Public transport link point
- P** Car parking
- R** Refreshments (pub, hotel, café)





Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work.

- Leave gates as you find them.
- Keep dogs under close control at all times.
- Keep to paths across farmland.
- Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls.
- Respect farm livestock, crops and machinery.
- Take your litter home with you.
- Take care on country roads.
- Protect wildlife, plants and trees.
- Guard against risk of fire.
- Make no unnecessary noise.

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



Circular town and country route

5km/3miles to 7.5 km/4½ miles depending on option

Allow 1½ hours

Hard surface, gravel and beaten earth paths with steps

Moderate

Boots or stout shoes recommended

PARKING Park at the Whitesands car park alongside the River Nith. You can conveniently reach the start point using buses or bicycles as this area has a bus terminus and cycle stands.

START at the foot of Devorgilla Bridge. You can explore the historical link with Lady Devorgilla by visiting Sweetheart Abbey in New Abbey. This elegant sandstone bridge was built around 1431 to replace the timber bridge of 1280. The central cutwater (pier) is extended up to the bridge parapet and was the site of the former

River Nith





Toll Gate marking the boundary between Dumfries and Maxwelltown. Follow the finger post for 'Burns' Walk Dalscone 3 Miles'. Pass under the Buccleuch Street Bridge and then past the swimming pool and rowing club. The next section of path is prone to flooding when the Nith is in spate. If your route is blocked then take the detour.

DETOUR Turn right up the hill, then left at the t-junction. Take the second road on the right (Irving Street) and then turn left at the next junction. Continue past Dumfries Academy and the entrance to the staff car park. In a short distance you will reach some railings and a gap in the wall. Descend the slope to rejoin the riverside path and follow the 'main route' directions.

8 **MAIN ROUTE** This route is a quiet corridor heading out of town. Follow the path straight ahead until it climbs the riverbank to meet Albany Place/Nunholm Road. Pass through the kissing gate and turn left along the pavement. After a short distance turn left at the signpost towards the river. As you continue along the path you will pass under one railway bridge and two road bridges. This section of the river is very popular with local fishermen. Shortly after the second road bridge you will reach a small car park. At this point you have two options:

- **OPTION 1** To return to the town centre follow the track away from the car park. This track joins the public road. Continue to the T-junction and turn right. Follow this road past Gracefield Arts Centre and Dumfries Academy and on through the town centre to return to the Whitesands and the start of your walk.
- **OPTION 2** Continue along the riverside path and pass under the Martinton Railway Bridge. The next section of the path runs high above the river and alongside the Dumfries and County Golf Course. After approximately 1/2 mile you will climb the steps up Dalscone Bank and walk among the impressive beech trees. Pass under the next road bridge, cross the stile on your right and climb the steps to meet the bypass. Turn left, heading for the roundabout. Descend through the subway

Suspension bridge at the Whitesands





Fountain and Midsteeple in Dumfries town centre

where you will find another sign for 'Burns Walk'. Shortly after leaving the subway take the steps on your left and continue along the path until you reach the bridge over the cycleway. Turn left through the gate to join the cycleway, then left along the cycleway for the return leg into town. Continue along the cycleway for just over $\frac{1}{2}$ mile, proceeding straight ahead at the road crossings, until you reach the sign for 'Town Centre and Station'. Turn right at this point to meet the public road, turn left and follow Edinburgh Road, Academy Street, Church Crescent and Buccleuch Street, turning left before the bridge to return to the Whitesands where you started your walk.



Circular park and riverside walk

6km/3½miles

1½ hrs

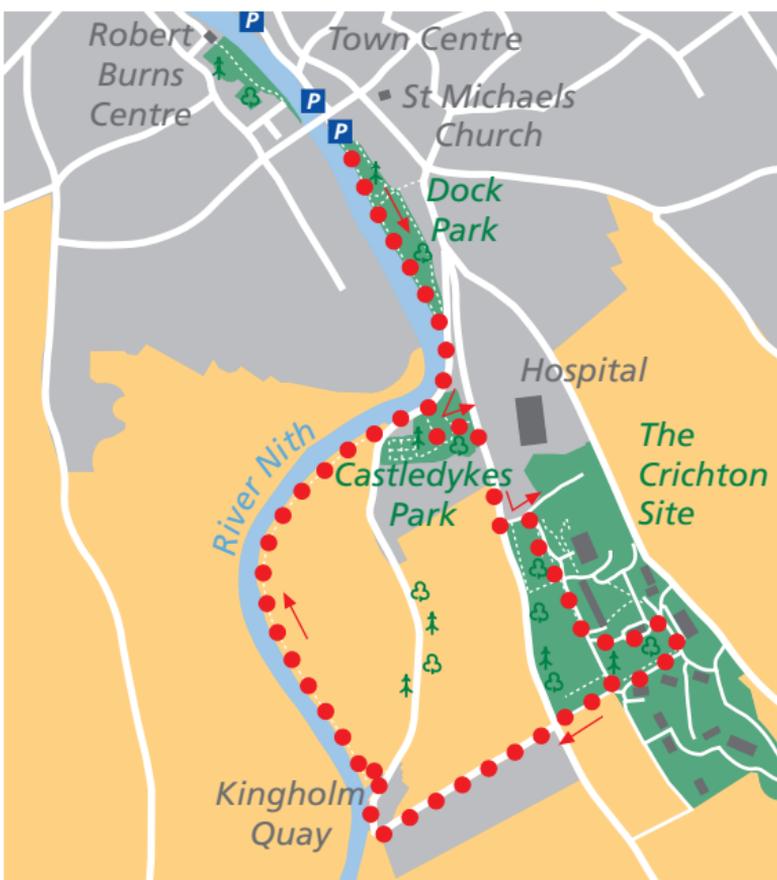
Hard surface paths/tracks (some shared with cyclists)

Moderate

Stout shoes recommended

Dock park, Crichton grounds and pedestrian/cycle route are suitable for wheelchair users. Dogs should be kept on a lead.

PARKING is in the car park at the entrance to Dock Park (St Michael's Bridge, Whitesands).



Castledykes Park, Dumfries



START Follow the pedestrian/cycle track between the metal arches at the riverside entrance to Dock Park. These arches represent Sweetheart Abbey and were used to promote ‘Dumfries in miniature’ at a Glasgow Garden Festival during the 1980s. Continue downstream alongside this tidal section of the River Nith, exit the park and cross the road opposite the entrance to Castledykes Park.

Follow the main path through the park in a broad anticlockwise sweep, take time to visit the sunken garden and look out for the site of the Royal Castle of Dumfries, built in 1186 by William the Lion. On leaving the park turn right along the public road, then take the first left and enter the grounds of the Crichton Royal Hospital.

This Victorian landscaped estate was established as the grounds for a pioneering psychiatric hospital and the handsome sandstone buildings and gardens are now home to The Crichton

Castledykes Park, Dumfries



- 12 University Campus and Business Park. The higher ground at the Crichton affords good views across the Nith to the granite mass of Criffel (see walk 7). Take the main/middle drive that sweeps to the right. On the corner turn right on to the gravel garden path. At the end of this section bear left on the flagstone path and pass under the stone and hedge archway. Pass through the water garden, up the steps and along the gravel path that skirts the topside of the playing field.



Rock Garden, The Crichton

Climb the embankment steps and turn left across the staggered junction, heading for the Crichton Memorial Church. Take either route around the church and turn right at the top of the hill (signed 'University Campus'). The building straight ahead is Easterbrook Hall and the north wing (in front of you) houses a museum presenting the story of pioneering mental health care in south west Scotland, a gallery of patient art and a wealth of hospital related



artifacts. The museum is open Thursday and Friday afternoons (all year) and Saturdays (from Easter to September).

At the end of the car park turn right down the tree lined footpath. At the end of this path turn left and immediate right between the 'no entry' signs and continue to the public road.

Turn left to the roundabout, then right, down Kingholm Loaning to Kingholm Quay. Keep hard in to the left hand side to avoid oncoming vehicles as you round the sharp right hand bend. Continue through the village to the harbour, and turn left on to National Cycle Route 7, which is a shared pedestrian and cycle path. This will take you past the cricket pitch and back to Dock Park.





Linear woodland and estate walk with an all ability trail for first 100m

3.5km/2miles

1 hr

Hard surface paths, beaten earth and boardwalks.

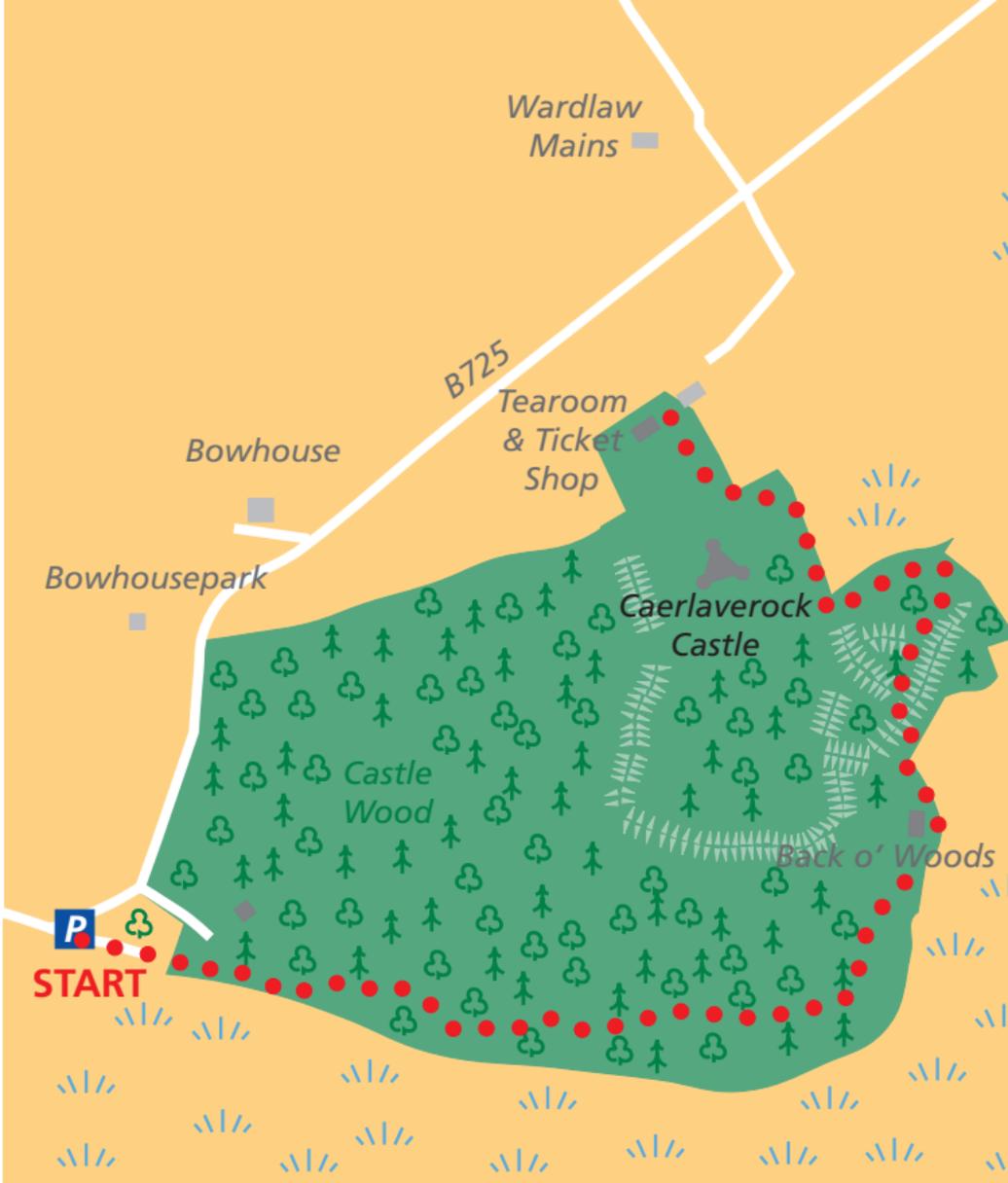
Moderate

Boots for full route. Binoculars recommended

PARKING Head out of Dumfries on the B725, pass through Glencaple and continue along the shore road into Caerlaverock National Nature Reserve. The car park is a layby approximately 2½ miles from Glencaple on the right hand side. If you wish to cycle to Caerlaverock follow National Cycle Route 7 from Dock Park heading for Gretna.

START You can learn about the local wildlife from the information boards before entering the nature reserve. The first 100m of this route is an all ability trail which terminates in a viewing area overlooking the merse. At the viewing





area bear left along the woodchip path and enter the woodland. The path runs along old earthbanks associated with the early castle and then skirts along a strip of spruce trees. Mid way along the path there is an option to turn off to a picnic area and bird-viewing seat. This is waymarked from the main path.

The huge mudflats of Blackshaw Bank are home to millions of shellfish and worms which provide sustenance



Oystercatcher

16 for thousands of waders and wildfowl, such as curlew, oystercatcher and shelduck. The entire population of barnacle geese from Svalbard (an island off northern Norway) spend winter on the Solway and a large proportion choose the merse and farmland around Caerlaverock. The rare and protected natterjack toad can also be found here; in fact Caerlaverock is home for the northernmost population. It can be identified by a distinctive yellow line along its back and can be heard croaking on warm summer evenings. At the southeast corner of Castle Wood the path turns left and on past Back o' Woods Cottages. Turn right along the woodchip path for a short circuit through a recently re planted broadleaved woodland with views out to neighbouring farmland.

This path rejoins the main track just below the site of the first castle at Caerlaverock that was abandoned around 1277 when the buildings started to subside and collapse. Continue to the impressive sandstone ruins of the second castle, a unique triangular medieval fortress.

The castle and grounds are managed by Historic Scotland. The entry charge is displayed on signs and tickets must be purchased from the visitor centre. The Castle, playground, visitor centre and toilets are open all year and the tearoom opens from April to October.

Return along the same route.





Circular forest path with special features

1 km / 1/2 mile

1/2 hr

Hard surfaced paths

Easy

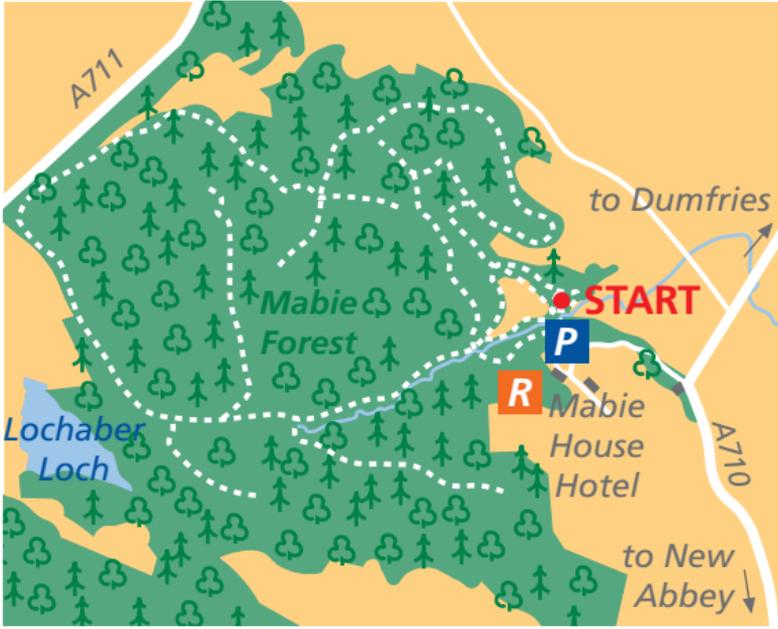
Stout shoes recommended

Suitable for accompanied and/or motorised wheelchair users

Mabie offers a good selection of walking and cycling trails and a wide range of associated facilities.

PARKING From Dumfries take the A710 Solway Coast road through Islesteps, follow the road for a further 1 1/2 miles to reach the entrance to Mabie Forest. Follow the signs to the car park. Less able visitors should follow the 'Less Able Only Parking' sign and park across the road from the play park. There is a charge for parking.

START Follow the trail start signs and meander through impressive natural pillars of Douglas Fir, Norway Spruce and Larch to the wooden bridge over Mabie Burn. At the far side of the bridge you will see the way markers for the start of all routes. Turn right in front of the way markers and descend the slope between the old sawmill and the toilets. Turn right at junction (near the barbecues), then left at the gate and along the forest track that leads over the burn. From this point on the path has many



special features including information boards, sensory raised gardens, bird and squirrel feeding stations and a roe deer family made from wire. The pond-dipping platform allows you to get close to the aquatic wildlife. After enjoying the boardwalk please close the gate and then return to the car park past the sawmill and over the bridge.

Mabie is a popular destination for locals and visitors and has a network of trails to suit a broad range of walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

School children on footbridge at Mabie Forest





Circular forest walk

1.5km/1 mile

1/2 hr

Hard surfaced tracks

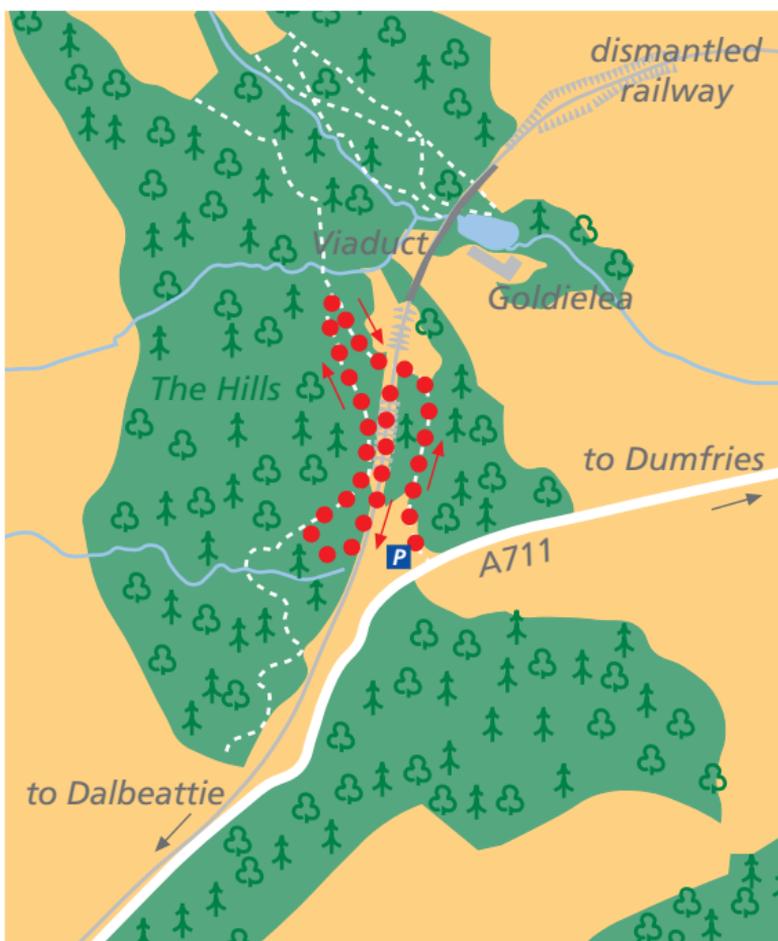
Moderate

Stout shoes or boots recommended

PARKING From Dumfries take the A711 towards Dalbeattie, pass through Cargenbridge and 1 1/2 miles after the roundabout you will see a sign on the right hand side for 'The Hills'.

START at the car park, climb or bypass the stile and follow the blue way marker posts along the forest road. At the junction with the old railway line turn left and follow the cutting. The path parts company with the line and heads towards a burn leading you through an interesting piece of woodland. The Hills was a plantation on an ancient woodland site and is now being managed as ancient woodland. The path swings uphill to join the forest road where you will get good views across the valley to Tower Wood,





so called because of the circular outlook tower built at the turn of the century as a folly for the owners of Dalskairth House.

The Hills is a good spot for seeing roe deer, pied flycatcher and greater spotted woodpecker. Butterflies are common along the forest roadsides during summer.

On joining the forest road turn right to complete the circuit. You can turn left at this point to gain some higher ground and views back towards Dumfries, but you will need to retrace your steps and continue down the forest road for the return leg of your walk.



Bird box on oak tree



Linear road and farmland/woodland walk

3½km/2½miles

1½ hrs

Hard surfaced paths with steps and minor road

Strenuous

Boots recommended

PARKING From Dumfries follow the A710 Solway Coast road through Islesteps to New Abbey. The setting of the car park alongside Sweetheart Abbey in the picturesque village of New Abbey is an impressive start point for this walk. There are toilets, tearooms, two pubs and a village shop close to hand.

Sweetheart Abbey is one of three Cistercian Abbeys in Dumfries and Galloway and was founded in 1273 by Lady Devorgilla de Balliol in memory of her husband John Balliol, the puppet king of Scotland and founder of Balliol College Oxford. Lady Devorgilla always carried a casket containing the embalmed heart of her late husband and when she died she was buried with the casket in the Abbey. The Abbey is now in the care of Historic Scotland.



START Leave the car park and turn right down Main Street until you reach The Square. Pass in front of the Abbey Arms and bear left. Turn left at the millpond and



continue for about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to the end of the minor road. Impressive boulder dykes skilfully constructed from granite 'footballs' bound this road. At the end of the road do not cross the burn; keep right and enter the field using the gate. Follow the path to the foot of the steps up to Waterloo Monument.

Your reward for a strenuous climb to the top is an excellent view over the Nith Estuary and across the Solway to the Lake District. In the foreground you can pick out the landmarks of New Abbey and the Crannog and island in Loch Kindar.

The memorial, built in 1810, commemorates the British, Belgian and Prussian soldiers who, under Wellington and Blucher gained the victory of Waterloo.

Return via the same route.

If time allows, Shambellie House Museum of Costume and New Abbey Corn Mill are both well worth visiting during your time in New Abbey.



Linear forest and upland walk

5km/3miles

2 hrs

Steep path, narrow, rough and soft in places

Strenuous

Boots recommended

Take food, waterproofs and map even in good weather

PARKING From Dumfries follow the A710 Solway Coast road through New Abbey. Follow the road for a further 1 1/2 miles, passing the road ends to Lochhill Farm and then Inglestonford Farm. Take the first signed minor road on the right towards Ardwall Farm. Continue to the roadside car park on the right hand side without blocking any entrances.

START Pass through the left hand field gate and take the next right turn. On reaching the forest





continue uphill and you will soon be walking alongside Craigrockall Burn. At the edge of the forestry ground cross the boundary fence using the stile and follow the path up the open hill to the summit. Return by the same route.

This is a strenuous walk, but if you choose a bright clear day, your efforts will be rewarded with great views across the Solway to the Lake District. The slopes of Criffel are well populated with skylarks and you may well hear their flight song as they hover high above the upland vegetation of heather, bog cotton and blaeberry. The loch at the bottom of Criffel is Loch Kindar; the larger island carries the remains of an old Kirk; the two smaller islands are Crannogs. These are man made islands, built as protected dwelling sites in pre-Roman and early Roman times.

Descend via the same route.



Particular thanks are extended to Thomas Florey, Valerie Bennet and Forest Enterprise.

Photographs by Keith Kirk, Graham Banks, Dumfries and Galloway Council and Dumfries and Galloway Tourist Board



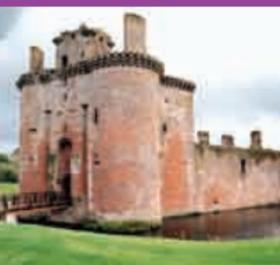
A Message from the Health Improvement Group
Walking can seriously improve your health & happiness. Enjoy!



WALKING

in and around

Dumfries & New Abbey



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

The Travel Line
t 0870 608 2608

www.visit-dumfries-and-galloway.co.uk

info@dgtb.visitscotland.com

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

Forest Enterprise Ranger Service
t 01387 247745

Dumfries & Galloway Council
Ranger Service
t 01387 260184