

WALKING

in and around

Thornhill

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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.visitdumfriesandgalloway.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



The natural place to walk





Thornhill, with its original wide street plan and roadside lime trees, sits centre stage on a rise in the Nith Valley. The 'Ducal Village' dates back to the 14th century and expanded to its present cross shaped layout centred on the 1714 statue of Pegasus. This was erected by the Duke of Queensbury to commemorate the building of the new Dumfries to Glasgow Road.

Explore the rich heritage of this varied landscape by climbing to the ancient hill fort of Tynron Doon or marvel at the Queensbury Marbles in the elegant church of Durisdeer before taking a stroll along the course of the Roman Road to one of the best preserved fortlets in Britain. Enjoy a tranquil stroll alongside the unspoilt Scar Water or a bracing walk with expansive views along a flood bank of the meandering Nith. Those seeking the drama of faster waters should head for the Drumlanrig to Burnmouth or Carron Linns walks.

The impressive sandstone Drumlanrig Castle can be viewed on the Burnmouth or Carronbridge walks and is well worth visiting at closer quarters. The 1st Duke of Queensbury built this baroque edifice and modelled it on George Herriots Hospital in Edinburgh.

Tynron Kirk provides further architectural interest, with its fine gargoyle waterspouts and spiral braided crowned chimneys. The churchyard has Covenanting connections and you can explore

2 the turbulent 'Killing Times' with a visit to the Martyr's monument in Durisdeer churchyard.

The walks in this leaflet pass through a wide range of habitats and offer great opportunities for watching wildlife in beautiful and dynamic working countryside. Look out for the other leaflets in this series and expand your experience of the delights of Dumfries and Galloway.



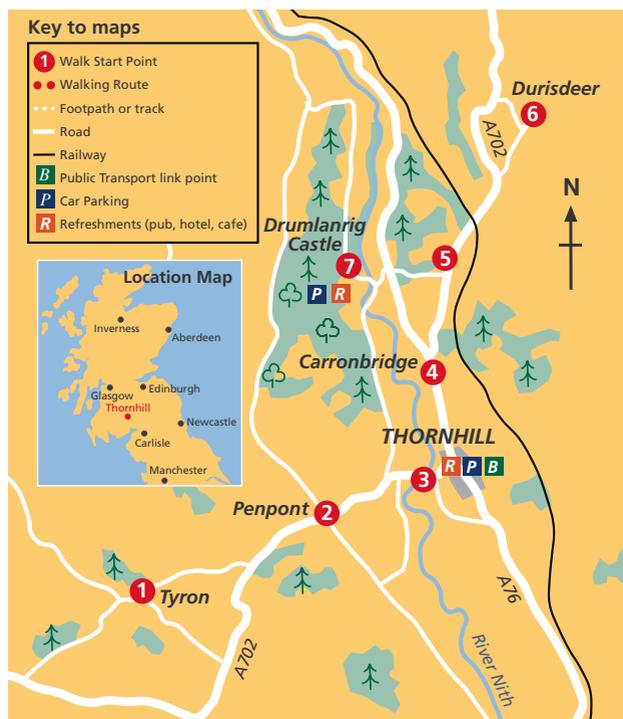
Drumlanrig Castle

THE WALKS

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Nithsdale Landscape



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 Nos. 321 and 329 cover this area in detail.

Foxgloves



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.



TYNRON DOON

View of Tynron Doon

Linear forest track and open hill walk

4.5 km/3 miles

Allow 1 1/2 hours

Hard surfaced tracks and open hill tracks, soft in places with gates

Strenuous

Boots

PARKING From Dumfries follow the A76 Glasgow Road to Thornhill and at the end of the village turn left on the A702 through Penpont. Take the second road to the right, which is signed for Tynron. Park to the rear of the village hall.

START Leave the car park and turn left, then left again to follow the lane past Tynron Kirkyard. The 17th century predecessor of the kirk was rebuilt

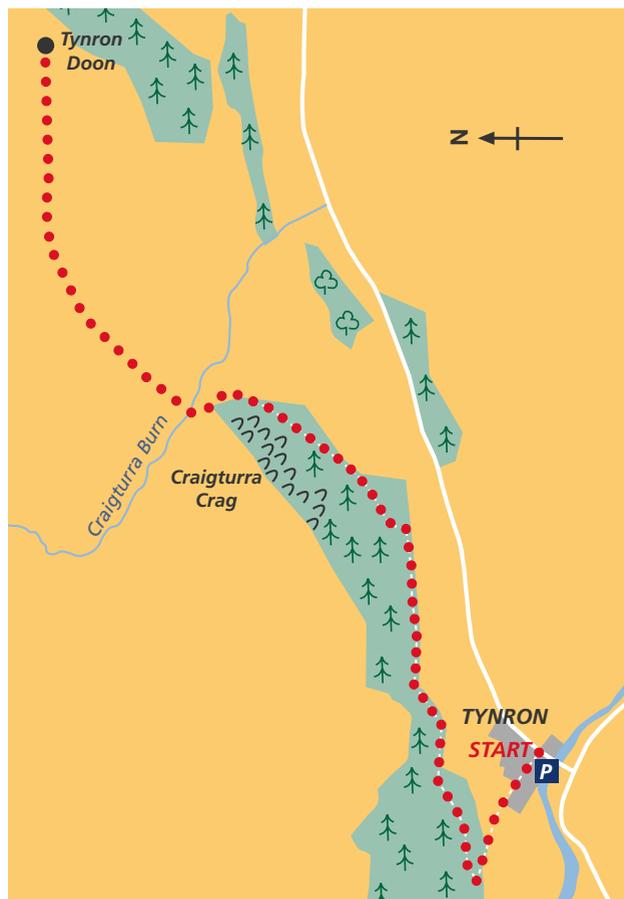
around 1750 using material from a Medieval tower-house on Tynron Doon. Climb the short rise into the woodland to reach the 5-track junction. Take the lower track on the right, which gives a rooftop view of Tynron. Pass the small



Tynron

waterfall and turn left at the next junction to skirt the foot of the quarry below Craigturra.

This crag, largely obscured by trees, has a hidden fissure known locally as the 'Fox's Hole', which yielded a flint scraper and may well have been inhabited. Climb the track through the plantation



and leave via the field gate following the grass track uphill. Pass through the next gate and turn sharp right to ford the burn before reaching the open hill through the final gate. Tynron Doon is the terraced hill to your right. Head for the saddle between the hills and join a well-worn sheep track leading up Tynron Doon. The summit area of this prominent hill was worked to form a fort in the Dark Ages, and has seen various developments including a 16th century tower-house and a 18th–19th century shepherds bothy.

Take time to relax and absorb the history and the view before returning via the same route.



PENPONT TO KEIR MILL

Byreholm Farm

Linear road and riverside walk

5.5 km/3½ miles

Allow 1½ hours

Hard surfaced paths soft in places with steps/gate

Moderate

Boots

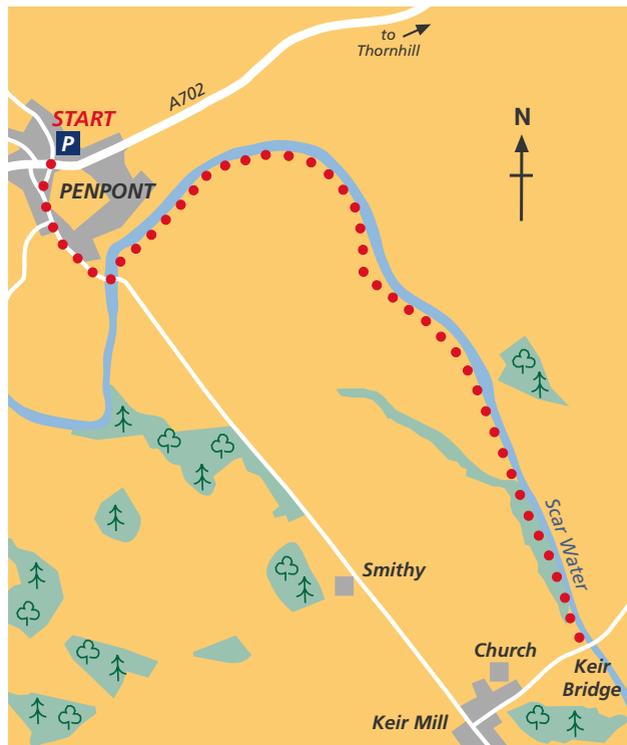
PARKING From Dumfries follow the A76 Glasgow Road to Thornhill and at the end of the village turn left on the A702 to Penpont. Turn right at the crossroads in Penpont and you will find the car park and public toilets on the right hand side.

START Turn left out of the car park and continue over the crossroads, passing the post office. Leave the village, cross the Scar Water and at the far side of the bridge turn left through the gate and follow the riverside path. This is a pleasant corridor rich in wildlife and gives good views of the hills to the east of the Nith Valley.



Penpont Village

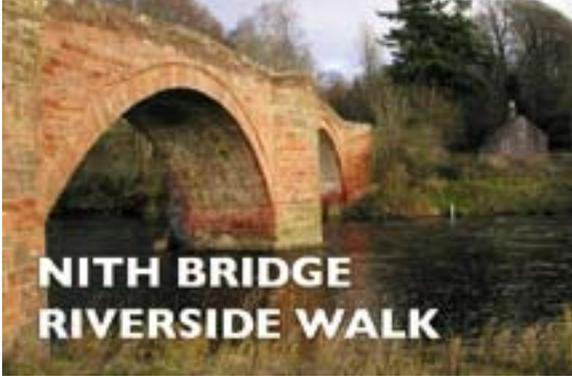
In winter you can watch the water through the ash and alder stems and you may well see goosander, white-breasted dippers darting from stone to stone and solitary feeding heron. Further along the path you will find some fine old gnarled oaks clinging to the riverbank. The path crosses a burn



and up a flight of steps to reach Keir Bridge. From this mid-point you can return along the river or turn right, pass the church into Keir Mill, where another right turn will take you along the roadside to Penpont. You will pass the smithy where Kirkpatrick MacMillan invented and built the first rear wheel driven bicycle around 1840.



Dipper



Linear riverside walk

5 km/3 miles

Allow 1 1/2 hours

Paths and tracks soft in places with gates and stiles

Easy

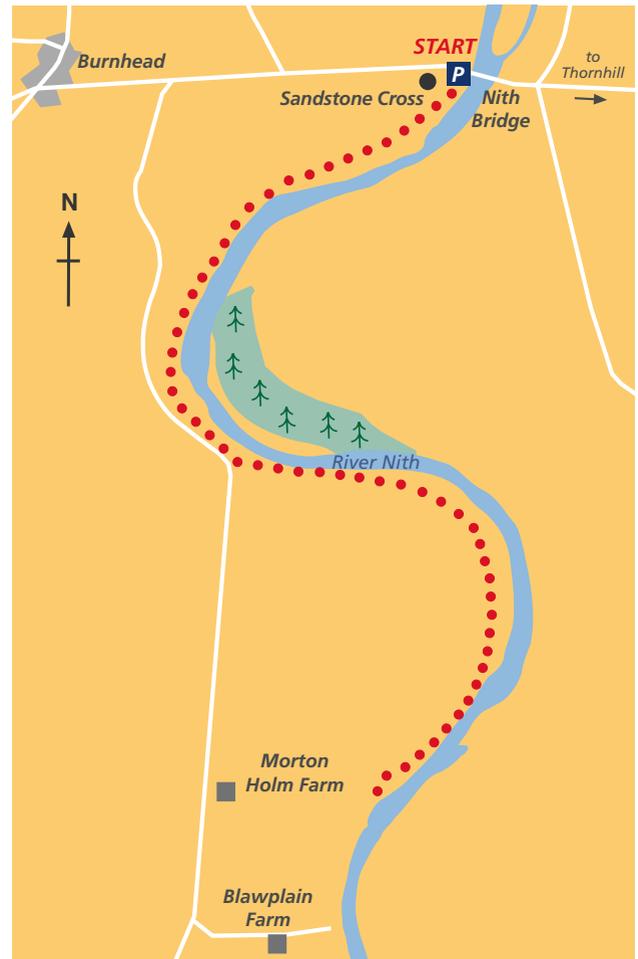
Boots

PARKING From Dumfries follow the A76 Glasgow Road through Closeburn and take the second turning on the left signed for Penpont and Moniave. After 1 1/2 miles you will reach a T-junction. Turn left, cross the bridge and park in the lay-by.

START Look across to the sandstone cross in the field alongside the lay-by. This is the most complete Anglian sculptured cross in the region. Descend the steps from the lay-by and head towards Nith Bridge. Pass through the unusual metal gate with the latch striker and turn right along the riverbank. This linear Nith-side walk gives you a feel for the broad expanse of Nithsdale. The wide meanders enclose gravel beds that are favoured nesting sites for oystercatchers. The prominent cone shaped hill to your right is



Anglian Cross



Tynron Doon, an impressive hill fort that is well worth visiting (see Walk No 1). Continue along the riverside path, which in some stretches runs along the gravel track. You will cross two stiles before you draw level with Morton Holm farm, visible across the fields to your right. At this point you reach a secondary river channel which will probably be dry. This marks the turning point of your walk.

Return along the same route.



View to Lowther Hill

Circular village and riverside walk

3 km/2miles

Allow 1 hour

Pavement, hard surfaced tracks and grass tracks, with gates and stiles

Easy

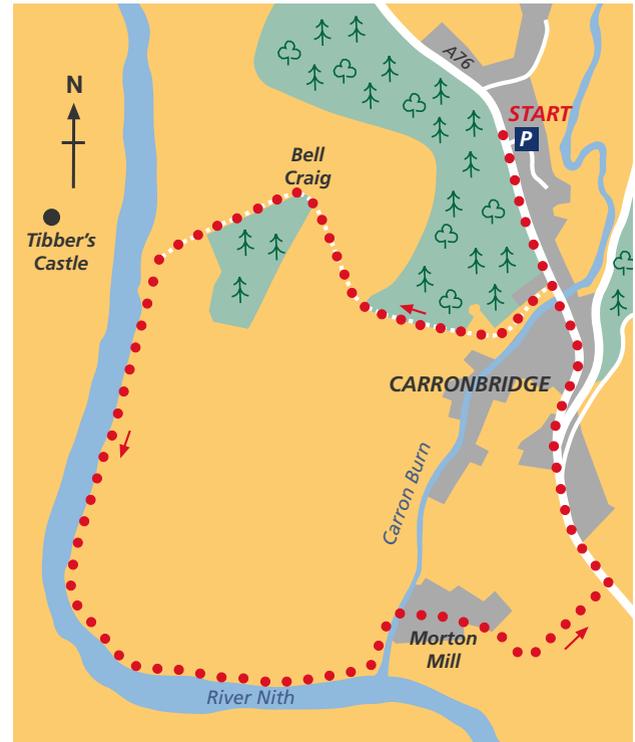
Boots

PARKING From Dumfries follow the A76 Glasgow Road through Thornhill to Carronbridge. As you drive uphill from the bridge you will see the Village Hall on the right. Turn right into Carronview and park by the village hall.

START Head downhill and cross the A76 just before the bridge. Follow the lane running past the cottages and above Carron Burn. Continue straight ahead at the track junction, pass through the kissing gate and follow the main track alongside the plantation. As you round the corner by the sandstone outcrop of Bell Craig, a fine



Carronbridge View



vista opens across the River Nith to Drumlanrig Castle.

On reaching the side of the Nith you can see the remains of Tibbers Castle through the trees on the far bank. Turn left through the field gate and follow the Nith downstream to the confluence with Carron Burn. Climb the stile and follow the field headland to the metal footbridge. Cross the burn, pass through the gate and follow the road through Morton Mill. Continue uphill, passing between the millstones and you will reach the main Glasgow Road. Cross the road and turn left along the pavement until reaching the bus shelter. Cross back over (to avoid a junction with poor visibility) and continue through Carronbridge to return to the Village Hall.



Linear riverside walk

0.5km/1 mile

Allow 1/2 hour

Hard surfaced paths soft in places

Easy

Boots

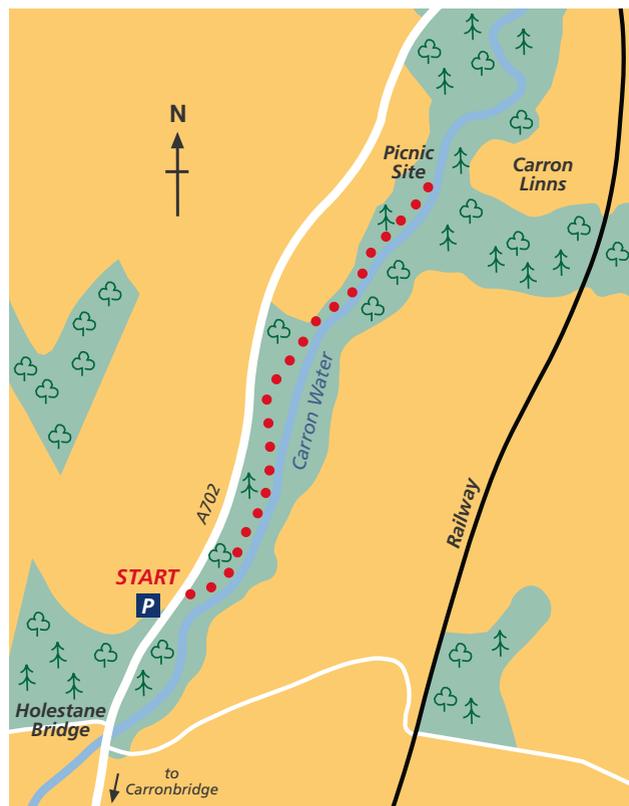
PARKING From Dumfries follow the A76 Glasgow Road through Thornhill to Carronbridge. Turn right on to the A702 Edinburgh Road and after 1 1/2 miles you will pass a road junction at a bridge. After a short distance park in the right hand layby by the information board.

START Follow the path to its terminus at the picnic table and return. Although this is a short linear walk it has plenty of interest and you may well be tempted to linger on one of the waterside benches and enjoy watching



Primroses

the wide range of wildlife. The route takes you alongside the Carron Linns passing through mixed woodland with some fine larch trees. It is hard to believe the West Coast mainline passes so close by.



Carron Linns



Durisdeer Village

DURISDEER WELL PATH

Linear or circular upland valley walk

6.5km/4 miles

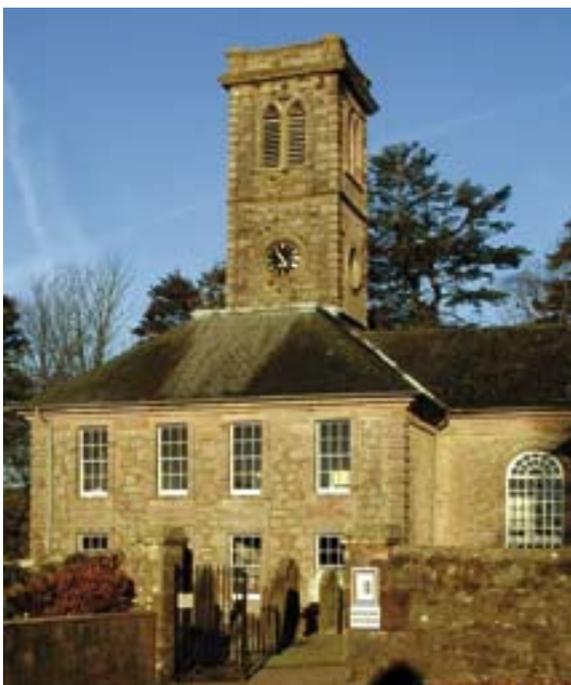
Allow 1 1/2 hours

Hard surfaced tracks and upland ground, soft in places

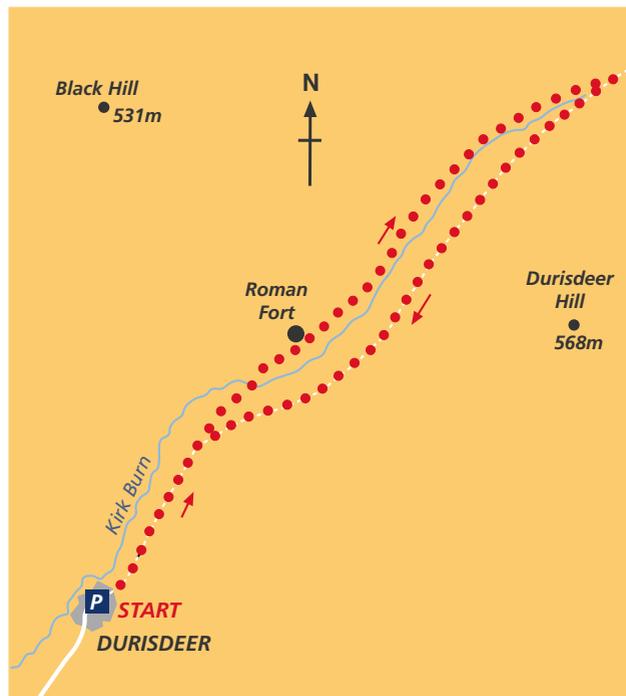
Moderate

Boots

PARKING From Dumfries follow the A76 Glasgow Road through Thornhill to Carronbridge. Turn right on to the A702 Edinburgh Road heading for Durisdeer and after three miles you will reach the Durisdeer junction to the right.



Durisdeer Parish Church



Park in the village square without obstructing any access points.

The elegantly proportioned parish church of Durisdeer is well worth investigating. Unusually grandiose for its remote setting, this fine building needs to be seen in the context of the historical importance of the Duke as representative of the monarchy in Scotland.

Of particular interest are the Queensbury marbles, the Queensbury Aisle and the martyr's monument (to the left, outside the main entrance).

START Follow the dead end road to the right of the church and churchyard. Pass through the gate at the road end and follow the track alongside the wall. This route was the main road to Edinburgh until the early 19th century when the Dalveen Pass road was opened. When you reach



the fingerpost to Durisdeer Roman Fortlet climb the ladder stile to the lower track and descend to the ford on route to the second ladder stile. Cross the stile and turn right following the rutted grass track to the fort. This track follows the line of a Roman Road past the southeast side of the fort that rises from the surrounding ground like a surfacing submarine. This is one of the best-preserved Roman fortlets in Britain. After visiting the fort you can return via the same route or continue cross-country to make a longer circular walk.

For the longer option continue along the track past the fort and on reaching the tin hut head cross country aiming for the angle in the wall. You will be crossing various burns and it is best to pick a route over higher and drier ground. On reaching the wall follow it uphill to the saddle between the hills. At the top you will find a gate in the wall giving access to the hill track. Turn right along the track to return to Durisdeer.





Humbie Holme

Circular riverside and quiet road walk

15.5km/ 9 1/2 miles

Allow 4 hours

Paths and tracks soft in places with gates, minor roads

Moderate

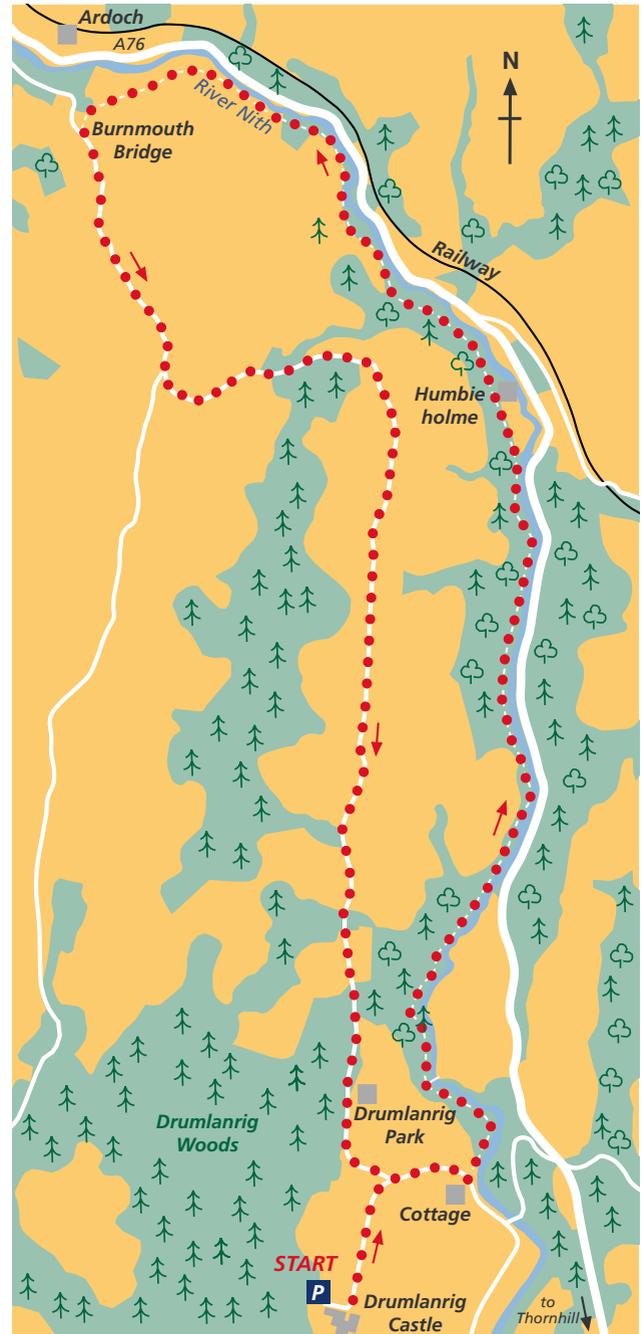
Boots

PARKING From Dumfries follow the A76 Glasgow Road through Thornhill and Carronbridge. Just over a mile out of Carronbridge take the left turn signed for Drumlanrig Castle, descend through the woods, across the bridge and turn right. Continue to Drumlanrig Castle pay and display car park.

START Retrace your approach route along the lime avenue and round the right hand corner. Turn sharp left at the bench opposite the cottage and descend the track to the field gate. Ignore the small gate on the right and follow the woodland track through the field gate.



River Nith



22 The Nith valley is an important transport corridor and, as the valley sides steepen, the west coast mainline converges with the Glasgow Road and the two routes are held in place with impressive engineering works.

Keep right until you reach the four-way junction above Humble Holm. Pass through the left hand gate on to the track above the cottage. At the next fork in the track keep straight ahead (the lower track is very wet). On reaching the edge of the woodland pass through the gate to the rough grazing ground and follow the track alongside the Nith. Avoid the tracks off to the left. On leaving the riverside trees of alder and willow the path starts to traverse upslope giving good views across the valley to Ardoch Farm. Pass through the gate by the sheepfold and on to the gate to the public road. Turn left and continue alongside Burnsands Burn. At the first road junction turn left just before the cottage.

This quiet and elevated road gives good views back to Lowther Hill, topped by a golfball shaped radar station (built for the Civil Aviation Authority), and across to the crescent of hills hiding and enclosing Kettleton reservoir.

As you cross the cattle grid at Drumlanrig Park look straight ahead through the trees to the Drumlanrig Castle. Descend past the estate office and turn right along the main avenue to return to your start point.



Nithsdale View



Thanks to .

Photographs by Volmar Nix, Richard Mearns, Dumfries & Galloway Tourist Board and Dumfries & Galloway Council.

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