Welcome

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To find out more about Dumfries & Galloway go to visitdumfriesandgalloway.co.uk

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Cover Images
Front – red squirrel
Back – bluebells at Castramon wood

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www.stand-united.co.uk
www.weesleekit.co.uk

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VisitScotland Information Centres

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Dumfries & Galloway is the perfect place to see amazing wildlife in unspoiled, natural habitats and whatever time of year you choose to visit there is always something new and exciting to witness. The glorious unspoilt coastline, varied terrain and numerous tranquil lochs provide backdrops for some captivating wildlife walks.

As you walk through invigorating landscapes you can enjoy beautiful views of the Solway Coast. Over 200 miles of coastline gives you a vast choice of literally hundreds of walks. The shoreline bursts with colour when sea campion forms a hanging garden on the cliffs in spring, whilst in May and June, the rocky crags ring out with the cries of nesting guillemots, razorbills, kittiwakes and cormorants. Along our sweeping coastline are some vitally important habitats. The natural wetlands that fringe the Solway Firth are an ornithologist’s paradise, particularly in the winter months when tens of thousands of wintering waders and wildfowl descend from the skies. Our coastal towns and villages have much to offer too, why not treat yourself to a delicious meal in one of the harbour side restaurants and enjoy locally caught seafood at its very freshest.

Marvel at the 360 degree scenery that stretches to the horizon as you stand on lush green hills. The Galloway Forest Park covers more than 300 square miles and provides a natural haven for wildlife. This landscape offers a great variety of options to walkers and boasts many short family-friendly strolls. Listen for the bird song; keep your eyes peeled ready to spot native birds and wild flowers in our magical woodlands. Stand by a burn in springtime and see colourful damselflies darting by. Spend a fun afternoon

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investigating the rock pools by the shore and spot the amazing sea creatures and shell fish that the tides have left behind.

The unspoilt countryside and the habitats it contains mean that the region protects a wide range of rare and endangered species. Red squirrels find refuge in the tranquillity of our quiet forests; the region is home to around 20% of the Scottish population so you have more chance of spotting a red squirrel here than anywhere else in the country. Red kites have been reintroduced to the area while ospreys have found their way to some of the great nesting sites the region has to offer at Wigtown, Caerlaverock and Threave. Dumfries & Galloway is also home to a large population of the UK’s rarest amphibian - the natterjack toad. They are the noisiest toad in Europe with their distinctive rasping calls able to be heard over several kilometres.

Our spectacular countryside is overflowing with nature’s finest sights, sounds and scents, so get your walking shoes on and enjoy one of our fantastic wildlife walks. If you enjoy these walks why not find out more about our wonderful wildlife by joining an experienced ranger on a guided walk. For more information, pick up a copy of the Countryside Events booklet from VisitScotland Information Centres throughout the region. Dumfries & Galloway hosts a number of popular walking festivals including Newton Stewart Walking Festival in May, Langholm Walking Festival in June and Moffat Walking Festival in October.

Enjoy Scotland’s outdoors responsibly

Everyone has the right to be on most land and inland water for recreation, education and for going from place to place providing they act responsibly. These access rights and responsibilities are explained in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. The key things are:

When you’re in the outdoors:

- take personal responsibility for your own actions and act safely
- respect people’s privacy and peace of mind
- help land managers and others to work safely and effectively
- care for your environment and take your litter home
- keep your dog under proper control
- take extra care if you’re organising an event or running a business.

If you’re managing the outdoors:

- respect access rights
- act reasonably when asking people to avoid land management operations
- work with your local authority and other bodies to help integrate access and land management
- respect rights of way and customary access.

Visit outdooraccess-scotland.com or call your local Scottish Natural Heritage office

Know the code before you go

Open all Year

Dumfries, 64 Whitesands DG1 2RS
Gretna, Gretna Gateway Outlet Village DG16 5GG
Southwear, M6 Service Area, near Carlisle CA4 0NS
Stranraer, Harbour Street DG9 7RA

Seasonal

Castle Douglas, Markethill Car Park DG7 1AE
Kirkcudbright, Harbour Square DG6 4HY
Moffat, Churchgate DG10 9EG
Newton Stewart, Dashwood Square DG8 6EQ

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Find all you want to do in Dumfries & Galloway, in one place.

Your local VisitScotland Information Centre has details of everything to see and do in Scotland. What's more we can book tickets for events, activities and attractions, arrange transport and find accommodation anywhere in the country. So whatever you're looking for, there's only one place to go.

Open all Year

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Wildlife

**Twite**
Large flocks of twite (a small finch) can be observed searching for food in the fields next to the track during the winter. This bird is similar in size to a linnet but with a longer tail and stubbier bill.

**Grey seal**
Larger than the common seal, Dumfries & Galloway is an important breeding area for grey seal where they can often be seen basking on beaches, sandbanks or rocks. When underwater, they can hold their breath for about 1.5 hours.

**Sea ducks**
Especially noted in winter, eider, scaup, widgeon, great crested and Slavonian grebe are all regularly seen in this area.

**Wading birds**
Several are found here, the most common include dunlin, lapwing, ringed plover, turnstone and curlew, Europe’s largest wader.

Local attractions

- Stranraer Museum
- Ryan Centre & Theatre
- Dunskey Gardens and Maze

Taking you along the shore of Wig Bay (part of Loch Ryan), this walk initially takes you east along a rough track to an area known as The Scar. This shingle ridge runs out into the loch affording impressive views of Ailsa Craig and the Kintyre coastline and in the summer months, is home to the largest colony of nesting migrant terns in the region. At the end of the track walk north along the shoreline where you will see huge mussel, scallop and razor shells visible on the beach until you come to a track running west into the village of Kirkcolm. The return part of the walk is along the A718 and leads back into the car park at the RSPB Reserve.

Did you know?
An eider duck can dive to about 20m below the surface where it can take mussel, clam, and scallop, which are swallowed whole and crushed in their large and muscular gizzards.
Enter the nature reserve from the car park through the gateway and turn right. The reserve contains an amazing variety of wildlife and the walk provides the opportunity to see the incredible and varied species. Follow the waymarked route towards the dramatic sea cliffs. Follow the cliffs that afford spectacular views of birds, flowers and sea towards the lighthouse, before briefly rejoining the road. Carry along the road a short distance and then carry straight on along the edge of the walled garden before taking the steps down to the viewpoint at the foghorn. After returning to the Information Centre turn right, following a grassy path towards Lagvag Point for the chance to see the precarious nests of the sea birds perched directly on the cliffs. Return via the same route to the Information Centre and follow the signs back to the car park through the coastal heath that is abundant with wildflowers, including several locally rare species.

Wildlife

Guillemot
These black and white seabirds breed on the cliffs in their thousands. They can dive to over 100m underwater where they feed on small fish such as sand eels.

Kittiwake
These pretty little gulls have yellow bills and black legs; they nest in colonies and build their nests on the steep cliff edges. They can live for up to 28 years and males and females usually pair for life.

Linnet
The beautiful song of the linnet can be heard all around the reserve. This finch, with its bright pink plumage is closely related to the twite, which can also be seen on the reserve occasionally.

Peregrine
These are powerful falcons, which often nest on sea cliffs. They can be seen patrolling the skies above the Mull of Galloway hunting for rock doves and other birds. It’s one of the fastest animals in the world and reaches speeds of up to 200mph when plunging from the sky after prey.

Wild flowers
Sea thrift, rock sea lavender, sea campion and spring squill create a beautiful display along the cliff tops and amongst the coastal grassland.

Local attractions
Logan Botanic Garden
Gallie Craig Coffee House
Portpatrick

rspb.org.uk/mullofgalloway

Did you know?
A guillemot’s egg is more pointed at one end to stop it rolling off cliff ledges where it nests.
The Burnside Trail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Parking</th>
<th>Disabled access</th>
<th>Level of difficulty</th>
<th>Duration of walk</th>
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<td>2 miles / 3 km</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>1 ½ hours</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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The Walk

From the car park, turn right onto the main street then left at the signpost for Kirkmabreck Church. Follow the road uphill, past the church to Balloch Wood. Turn left into the woodland at the entrance board and follow waymarkers for the Burnside Trail. Immediately upon entering the wood you come to the Balloch Wood Stone Circle: 7 granite slabs elevated on stainless steel pillars. Beyond them, the path initially follows the edge of the wood; a fork in the path marks the outward and return legs of the loop - you may either turn right into the larch trees (the Larch Trail) along a woodland ride which provides easier access through the forest for the less able, or remain on the Burnside Trail by keeping left alongside the drystane dyke. This path soon bends sharply right as you approach the Balloch Burn. It then climbs through the mixed woodland above the burn before descending into the gorge. Follow the path along until it climbs up to the right, with a drystane dyke and a small stream on your left as far as Cardoon Bridge, indicated by a wooden post at a gap in the wall.

To return to the start point of the walk turn right and follow the Larch Trail which leads you through the larch trees and completes the loop near to the standing stones. Alternatively, you can carry on walking through the woods along the Pond Trail which brings you out at the Garrochar Wildlife Ponds. To return from there simply retrace your steps.

Wildlife

Grey wagtail
These bobbing birds can sometimes be seen darting from boulder to boulder over the fast-flowing burn where it is hunting for its insect prey. It is more colourful than its name suggests with slate grey upper body and distinctive yellow under-tail. Its tail is the longer that those of the pied and yellow wagtails and it is constantly on the move wagging, dipping, and snapping up and down.

Great tit
Heard on the quiet Larch Trail, this common bird is green and yellow with a glossy black head, white cheeks and a distinctive two-syllable song. It is a woodland bird which has readily adapted to man-made habitats to become a familiar garden visitor. Its skills of adaptation are shown as it’s beak changes shape very slightly over the year as food changes from insects and caterpillars in spring, to nuts and seeds in winter. On this walk also keep a look out for blues tits and the smaller coal tit too.

Red squirrel
The endangered red squirrel thrives in woodlands like Balloch Wood, and its bushy tail can often be seen bounding from tree to tree. One of the best times to see them is during the months of breeding season around January and February. With few or no leaves on the trees, this is an ideal time to spot the dramatic and high speed courtship chases up, down and around the trees. Look out for the interpretation panel and feeding station.

Local attractions

Creetown Gem Rock Museum
Creetown Heritage Museum
Marrbury Smokehouse at Carsluith Castle

www.creetown-walks.co.uk
From the visitor centre, walk back along the entry road until you come to the small footbridge on your right. Stepping over it follow the route which takes you up towards the Clints of Dromore. When you reach the old railway line turn left and follow it along through a small area of birch woodland, very popular with small birds. Carry on through a small cutting and on the damp stone walls amongst the mosses you will find carnivorous sundews and two types of heather: the cross-leaved heath and the bell heather. Walking down from the viaduct you can see the stone foundations of the farmstead of Little Cullendoch. Keep an eye out for some of Matt Baker’s sculptures hidden away along this walk. The Big Water of Fleet Viaduct was completed in 1860. Now it provides an ideal home to numerous nesting swift. Listen out for their high pitched calls and watch their high speed flying during the summer months. From the viaduct, walk back to the starting point at the visitor centre.

## Wildlife

### Wheatear

Look out for wheatear hopping across the ground in summer. It is blue-grey on top with black wings, an orange flush to the breast and a black cheek. In flight it shows a white rump and a black ‘T’ shape on its tail. They nest in holes in the ground or in piles of rocks and can often be found living in rabbit burrows.

### Wild flowers

There are many different wild flowers and other plants along the walk. Watch out for the bright pink petalled ragged robin, and brilliant yellow bird’s foot trefoil. On the boggy areas you may see heath spotted orchid, the aromatic bog myrtle and waving tufts of cotton grass which grouse chicks love to feed on. Don’t forget to keep an eye out for the spectacular sundew. This carnivorous plant traps insects on its leaves which are covered in sticky hairs. Once stuck, the leaf closes in on its catch and releases enzymes which digest the fleshy parts of the insect.

## Local attractions

- Creetown Gem Rock Museum
- Creetown Heritage Museum
- The Cat’s Moustache Gallery
Wildlife

Nuthatch
These entertaining birds are quite noisy and can regularly be seen gathering peanuts from the feeders at the first hide. They find much of their insect and spider prey in tree trunks and it is the only tree climbing bird in Britain that can move head-downwards as well as up.

Willow tit
Although declining in other parts of the UK, willow tits are still doing well in this part of Scotland. They like damp woodland with rotten trees where they can build their nests and can be spotted from the reserve hides.

Greenland white-fronted goose
These are one of the rarest geese that visit the UK. They migrate here every winter from Greenland; a journey that includes an incredible flight up and over a 1½ mile high ice cap. For best sightings, head to the goose viewing platform or on the farmland close to the car park.

Ducks and waders
Teal, mallard, shoveler, lapwing, redshank and snipe can all be seen throughout the year on the lagoon in front of the hides. See if you can hear the call of the lapwing which sounds like an old-fashioned radio being tuned in.

Red kite
Look out for these spectacular birds soaring above the picturesque area of Loch Ken. Red kites were re-introduced into Dumfries & Galloway in the 1990s and numbers have been on the rise every since. Why not follow the Galloway Red Kite Trail while you are here?

Local attractions

Castle Douglas Food Town
Threave Castle
Threave Gardens

www.rspb.org.uk

Did you know?
Red kites have a wingspan of nearly two metres but weigh just over 1kg, making this bird extremely agile.
Mersehead

The Walk

From Dumfries, take the A710 Solway Coast road to Caulkerbush. Just before the village the reserve is signposted to the left.

Location

Distance 3.1 miles / 5 km

Parking Yes for up to 25 cars

Disabled access Yes

Level of difficulty Easy

Duration of walk 2 ½ hours

Visitor Centre Mersehead Information Centre

Turn right from the Information Centre to join the Wetland Trail. Walk on to reach the fingerpost before turning left down the granite/grass path. The path leads to the Bruaich birdwatching hide that overlooks shallow wetlands. Return to the main path and turn left. Go through the wooden gate and follow the main path. At the woods turn left at the fingerpost and follow the wide path that leads to the Meida birdwatching hide that overlooks wetland and reedbed. Return to main path and go straight. Pass through a kissing gate to join The Coastal Trail. This grassy path leads through the rest of the wood down to the shore. Pass through the kissing gate onto the shore before turning right at the fingerpost. Walk along the shore for approx. 1km until you reach the next fingerpost. Turn right over the dunes through another kissing gate to join the rest of the Coastal Trail. This waymarked path leads you back along the merse (saltmarsh) to the Mersehead access road. Turn right at the road and back towards the Information Centre and car park.

Wildlife

Natterjack toad
Our rarest amphibian, living in only in a few coastal sites in Dumfries & Galloway. It hunts at night by running after prey rather than sitting in ambush like common toads, and can dig its own burrow in the sand to avoid the heat of the day. The golden-eyed amphibians have a distinctive yellow stripe down their backs. Listen out for their noisy rasping call.

Spotted flycatcher
These long distance migrants make their way all the way from central Africa to spend the summer here. Larger than a pied flycatcher, grey-brown in colour with an off-white breast, marbled with darker grey and a streaked forehead. They perch conspicuously and watch for passing insects, flying out to snap them up, before returning to the perch. Recent dramatic population decline puts the spotted flycatcher high on the list of threatened species.

Breeding wading birds
Seen from the Bruaich Hide, breeding wading birds such as lapwing and curlew hold territories between April and June. During the autumn and winter months, the wetlands and surrounding fields hold thousands of barnacle geese, pintail and teal. Teal are collectively known as a ‘spring’ on account of the way they suddenly take-off almost vertically.

Local attractions

John Paul Jones Museum

National Museum of Costume

Sweetheart Abbey

Barend Riding Centre

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Kirkconnell Flow - Butterfly Walk

From the reserve car park, follow the waymarked posts with a blue butterfly symbol out along a wide flat track through mature Scots pine and birch woodland. The track leaves the woodland after approx. 300m and continues out across the open peat bog. After approx. 500m turn off the track to the left and follow the waymarked posts along the path as it winds its way back through pine woodland. Cross two footbridges before following the trail through a heathery glade, a grassy picnic field and birch woodland back to the car park. The walk is rough underfoot and good boots or wellingtons are recommended as the path can become wet at times. You may notice other waymarked posts showing a pink bird symbol. These refer to the Snipe Walk, which can be easily added as a loop to the end of your walk taking you through mature Scots pine and birch woodland.

Wildlife

Butterflies
Kirkconnell Flow is a great place to spot butterflies in spring and summer. Look out for the green hairstreak, orange tip, red admiral, comma, peacock, and the large and small heath butterfly amongst others. The large heath is a bog and wet heath specialist which can be mainly seen in late July and early August. It has a slow lumbering flight and always rests with its wings closed showing off its orange underside colouration and black eye spots on its hind wings.

Adder
During summer, adders can often be seen basking in the mid morning sun. Look out for the distinctive dark or black zigzag stripe along their backs but don’t get too close as, although very few people are bitten, these snakes are venomous. Adders are one of the few viviparous snakes (giving birth to live young) and in August, females give birth to between 3 and 20 young.

Common lizard
Like adders, common lizards can also be seen basking in open glades and on footpaths soaking up the heat of the sun. Watch out for a fast movement or rustle in the vegetation at the side of the path as you walk.

Cotton grass
In the late spring the bog is carpeted in white as the cotton grass flowers. Follow the butterfly walk out onto the open bog for views of this magnificent spectacle.

Cranberry
The delicate trailing stems of cranberry with their distinctive red berries are a common site on the bog in autumn and winter.

Local attractions

Mabie Forest
Mabie Farm Park
New Abbey Corn Mill

Did you know?
Butterflies can fly at a speed of 12 miles per hour. Some butterflies taste with their feet in order to find out if a plant is a suitable host to lay eggs on.
Wildlife

Barnacle goose
Skeins or flocks of geese can often be seen flying across the sky in long lines or in a ‘V’ formation. As they pass over you can hear their noisy chorus of barking or yapping sounds. The Solway Firth is a very important wintering ground for this species with the entire population of Svalbard barnacle geese overwintering in this area.

Skylark
Well known for its vertical display flight, look and listen out for the melodious summer song of the courting male skylark. Slightly larger than a sparrow, this charismatic songbird raises its small crest when excited or alarmed.

Whooper swan
The whooper swan is larger than a Bewick’s swan and can be identified by its longer neck, angular head and more extensive yellow triangular patches on the black bill. It is mainly a winter visitor from Iceland.

Shelduck
The goose-like common shelduck is a striking bird with its red bill, white and chestnut body, dark green head and neck. Look out for them feeding in large numbers on the merse along this walk. After breeding, between July and October, they migrate to the Wadden Sea, northern Germany, where they moult and become flightless for several weeks. A few adults stay behind to provide crèche facilities to that year’s ducklings.

Local attractions

Savings Bank Museum
Robert Burns House
Caerlaverock WWT Centre
Caerlaverock Castle

The starting point is located at the Hollands Farm, and is only a short walk from the reserve carpark. The route takes you to the NNR via a suitably surfaced farm track, which provides great views over surrounding farmland, where various species of wildlife can be observed throughout the year. At the end of the track, the footpath enters the NNR at a freshwater wetland area known as “The Flooders”. Due to the wet terrain at this location, a raised timber boardwalk has been installed, which meanders through a substantial area of reedbed habitat leading to a viewing hide. The boardwalk extends approximately 100 yards beyond the hide and ends where a grass surfaced stretch of the path commences, running on or parallel to an old floodbank. Here, views over saltmarsh and mudflat habitats can be experienced with the 1,800 feet high Criffel Hill providing a fantastic backdrop. This grassy stretch extends for approximately 700 yards, before turning right and back inland onto the Flooders area once again. A second stretch of boardwalk is then encountered as the path heads back the farm track, where the circular route terminates.
From the Bowling Club car park, enter the woodland on the western shore of the loch and follow the path which meanders through the trees until you reach the road, looking out for the carved sculptures along the way. Follow the roadside for approx 250m and then turn left down the track which leads towards the castle. Have a look around the castle ruins before heading east along the loch shore until you reach a foot bridge which takes you over the Valison Burn. Take in the view from the bird hide and if you’re lucky you may spot moulting mute swans or the breeding displays of great crested grebe during the summer. Continue on along the edge of the field and woodland until you reach the main road. Cross straight over and follow the road up and then to the left and this will bring you back to your start point.

Wildlife

Woodland birds
The ancient woodland surrounding the loch is great place to spot woodland birds. Woodpeckers, wood pigeons and buzzards can be seen year round, while in spring and summer the woods come alive with the likes of pied flycatchers, tree pipits, redstarts and warblers. Edging much of the woodland around the loch are reedbeds. Keep an eye out for sedge warble and willow tit in these areas.

Wintering wildfowl
Castle Loch is an very important site for the flocks of pink-footed and greylag geese. Look out for them during the autumn and winter when they fly in from the surrounding feeding areas to roost safely on the loch at night. This is also the best time to see goosander.

Otter
These elusive creature are often spotted in and around the edges of the loch. To keep themselves warm and dry, an otter has very thick coat. One scientist counted up to 40,000 hairs in one square inch!

Damselsflies
A number of different species, including the golden ringed dragonfly and the rare variable damselfly can be spotted on this walk. Along the Valison Burn just downstream of the bridge is a good place to see these most ancient creatures which have been flying about for the last 300 million years, before even dinosaurs roamed the earth.

Local attractions
Lochmaben Castle
Mossburn Animal Sanctuary
Dryfesdale Lodge Visitors’ Centre

Did you know?
Mute swans are so named because, compared to other species of swan, they make very little noise.
Langholm Moorland

Start at the Kiln Green car park, turn right and follow the main street into Langholm. Just before the Town Hall, turn left up the Kirkwind Road. Follow this road up the hill until the road becomes a track and passes through the golf course. At the gate onto the moor there are several tracks up to the hill - take the track on the left that heads gently up the hill. This track crosses the service road up to the monument (worth a detour). Follow the path straight ahead, pass through a gate and follow the path as far as the Castle Craigs (stone cairns). At this point the path becomes less obvious – turn left down the hill alongside Rashiel Sike and cross over the Tarras Water at the footbridge. Follow the river downstream for a short way and then climb the bank to join a road. Follow the road south, cross over a bridge and continue up the road for about a mile. Keep a look out for a track on your right hand side that cuts across the moor to enter Long Wood. Follow this track through the wood and past the Round House back into Langholm.

Wildlife

Emperor moth
The spectacular emperor moth can be found on moorland and open country. The males can be identified by their bright orange hindwings and are seen flying by day, while the greyer females fly at night. A male emperor moth can home in on a female by her scent from perhaps one kilometre away.

Roe deer
The roe doe is smaller in size than the buck, which can be identified by short antlers and markings on its head. In summer the adult coat will be a rich red, becoming a greyish fawn colour flecked with yellow in winter.

Red grouse
The red grouse has a plump body, short tail and hook-tipped bill. They are reddish-brown in colour but they get their name from the males bright red comb above his eye. Their legs and feet are covered in pale feathers. Listen out for their distinctive call which often ends with a sound resembling “go-back-go-back-go-back”

Hen harrier
Look out for these birds of prey quartering the moorland hunting for grouse. The males are light grey with black wing tips and the females and juveniles predominantly brown with a white rump and a long, barred tail, which give them the name ‘ringtail’. They are spectacular fliers and in addition to their sky dancing courtship behaviour, they also perform a mid air food pass. The male approaches the nest area with food and the female flies up and underneath him, he then lets the food drop and in that instant she flips onto her side or back to catch it in her talons.

Local attractions

The Malcolm Monument
Clan Armstrong Trust Museum
Gilnockie Tower
McDiarmid Memorial

The Walk
Location Langholm
Distance 6.49 miles / 10.46 km
Parking Yes - Kiln Green car park
Disabled access No
Level of difficulty Moderate (add in icon)
Duration of walk 2 ½ hours approx
Visitor Centre No

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Facing the Moffat Town Hall turn left down the High Street towards Dumfries. When you reach the War Memorial, turn right on to Church Street and follow the road down to the river. Turning left walk along the river side until you cross over the A701. At that point, cross the river and head towards Beattock following road for ½ mile and then turn left at the Annandale Way sign towards Dyke Farm. The first signpost on the left signifies entrance to Dyke Farm Nature Reserve. Having walked round the Reserve, its many ponds and varied flora return to the entrance gate, turn left and follow the track through two gates. At the Moffat Community Nature Reserve walk straight ahead on the hard path and you will reach a hide situated beside a lochan. Enjoy a contemplative moment in the former gravel and sand quarry and then retrace your steps up the track to the A701 and then turn right to return to Moffat High Street. Parking is also available at the Community Nature Reserve for those wishing to enjoy a short walk around the Reserve and it is a short walk up to the entrance of the Dyke Farm Nature Reserve.

Wildlife

Teal
A great place to see these relatively flighty birds many of which are winter residents who have flown in all the way from Siberia.

Stock doves
What may be the largest breeding colony in Dumfries & Galloway, they have a black tipped tail and two small black wing-bars on each wing.

Treecreepers
There are two resident pairs at Dyke Farm Nature Reserve. These small, brown, almost mouse-like birds have a habit of running up tree-trunks searching out insects which it picks from crevices in the bark with its fine curved bill. When breeding, the female lays very pretty pink-speckled white eggs.

Kingfisher
The iridescent blue green sheen of the kingfisher either flitting by or perched on a branch staring intently down into to water is a real treat when seen on any walk. Its relatively large beak is very aerodynamic and helps it to dive from its perch, towards its prey, with maximum speed and minimum splash.

Orange tip butterfly
A beautiful butterfly which is abundant in the area in spring. The adults have white upper sides to their wings with orange tips, while the undersides have a mottled green pattern.

Painted lady butterfly
Often seen at the reserve in September and October, the painted lady butterfly travels over 1500 miles from the mountains of Morocco to spend the summers here. It has orange-brown wings with black and white spots on forewing, with mottled brown undersides with spots.

Local attractions

Grey Mare’s Tail Nature Reserve
Craigieburn Gardens

Did you know?
A single pipistrelle bat can consume up to 3,000 insects in one night!
The walk begins at the Kirkconnel Parish Society Base, situated on the north side of the village main street. Walk west from here, past the post office and towards the end of the village. Immediately before the road crosses the Polbower Burn, turn right onto a minor road and follow north for approx. 100m. Passing underneath the railway, turn immediately left onto the start of the Baker’s Burn Path. The path winds its way upstream, occasionally crossing the river for approx. 2km. The path ends at a small car park on the minor road leading from Kirkconnel to Kirkland. There are fantastic views up and down the Nith valley. At this point you can either retrace your steps back down the riverside path or follow the minor road back down the hill to Kirkconnel. To extend the walk, follow the road north for approx. 1.5km through Kirkland Farm to St Conal’s Church and Kirkyard, believed to date back to the 9th century. If you are looking for a long strenuous walk, follow the Geology Trail for approx. 15 miles over the hills to Wanlockhead.

Did you know?
Dragonflies are among the most ancient of living creatures. These amazing insects were flying some 300 million years ago, before even dinosaurs roamed the earth.

Wildlife

Dipper
Look out for a medium sized plump bird either bobbing up and down in the river, or flying fast and low above the water. The dipper is a common sight all year round. With their strong feet and wings, Dippers walk underwater along the bottom of rivers searching amongst the stones for insects such as mayflies and caddis flies.

Dragonflies and damselflies
In spring or summer look out for bright flashes of colour over the burn. Species in this area include large red and common blue damselflies and the common hawker dragonfly which can have a wingspan of up to 10cm. These insects often return to the same perch time and time again. So if you see one fly off, stay still and be patient and you should be rewarded with a great view when they return.

Fungi
In the autumn the banks of the burn are home to a wide variety of fungi. Look out for the distinctive red and white cap of the fly agaric or the brown cap and thick white stalk of the birch bolete.

Buzzard
Britain’s most common bird of prey is a regular sight along this walk. Look out for them soaring high above scanning for their favourite prey, rabbits. Sometimes known as the “Dancing Hawk” because of their habit of landing in open, often freshly ploughed, fields and dancing up and down. The noise sounds like rain to worms and they rise to the surface and are eaten by the buzzards. Other raptors that you may see on the walk include the smaller kestrel and merlin.

Local attractions
St Conal’s Church and Kirkyard
Sanquhar Tolbooth Museum
Drumlanrig Castle