

WALKING

in and around

Galloway Forest Park



The natural place to walk





WELCOME TO THE GALLOWAY FOREST PARK

The Galloway Forest Park sits in the heart of Galloway and has some of the most dramatic scenery in the South of Scotland. Rugged, heather-clad hills surround tranquil valleys. Burns cascade down steep, rocky slopes into upland lochs. There is also some of the most natural, ancient woodland in Scotland.

Amidst all this wild scenery is a wealth of wildlife. Red and roe deer live in the forests and hills. A range of birds of prey frequent the area, from the mighty golden eagle to the diminutive merlin. Wild goats thrive on the rocky slopes near Clatteringshaws and can be viewed from laybys along the Queens Way. Nearby, the Red Deer Range allows you to see these normally elusive creatures up close.

With miles of waymarked trails and visitor centres at Glen Trool, Clatteringshaws and Kirroughtree, the Galloway Forest Park is easy to explore. For experienced hillwalkers, there are plenty of opportunities to get off the beaten track. At 843m/2770ft Merrick is the highest peak in Southern Scotland and dominates the scenery around Glen Trool.

This guide gives a taster of what is on offer. A range of walks are described, including a short 'All Abilities' trail, suitable for wheelchair users.

THE WALKS

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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 maps (No 318 & 319) cover this area in detail.

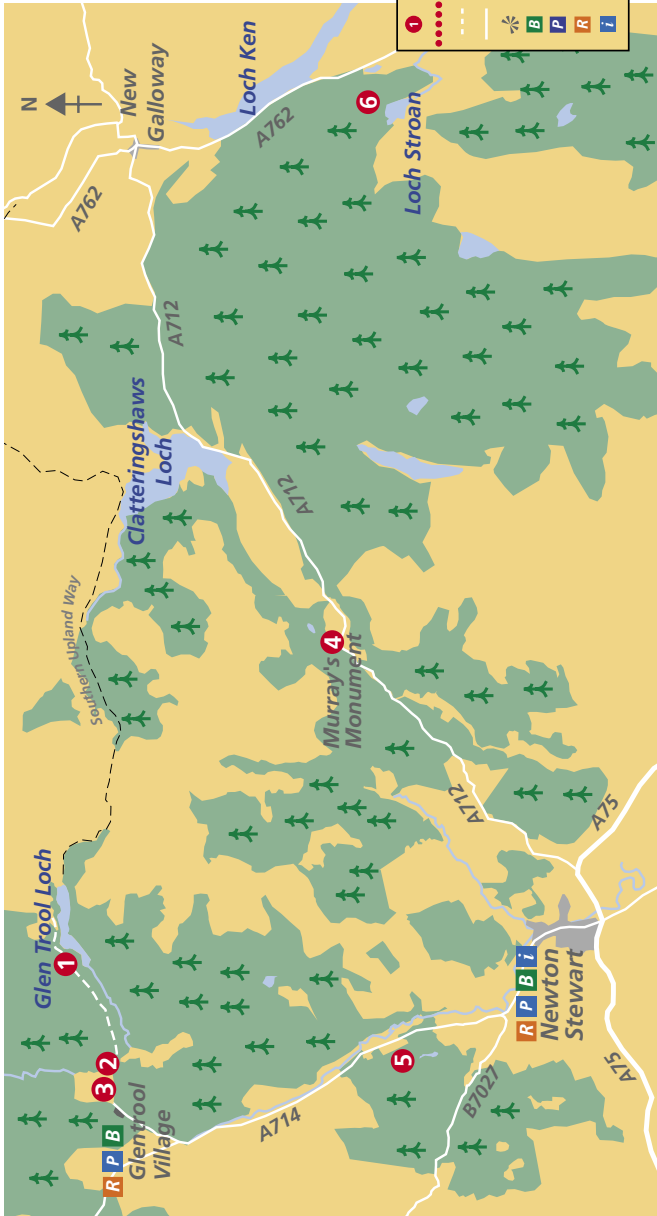




Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work.

- 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.

Location Map



1	Walk Start Point
.....	Walking route
- - - -	Footpath or track
—	Road
*	Viewpoint
B	Public transport link point
P	Car parking
R	Refreshments (pub, hotel, cafe)
i	Tourist Information



LOCH TROOL CIRCULAR

Circular lochside and forest walk

8.5km/5 ½ miles

Allow 3 hours

Hard surface paths and tracks. Beaten earth. All soft in places. Stiles, kissing gates and a field gate.

Strenuous

Boots recommended

PARKING Follow the A714 towards Girvan, turning right at Bargrennan to Glentool village. Follow signs to Glen Trool Visitor Centre. Go past the visitor centre and continue to follow the road for 3km/1 ½ miles. Take the first tarred road on your right and follow it to reach a car park just before a bridge.

START From the car park, follow the green waymarkers.

Follow the Southern Upland Way, southern Scotlands' long distance footpath past Caldons House, through remnants of the ancient woodlands that once covered most of Glen Trool. Continue uphill into conifers on the steep southern side of Loch Trool. Along the way, viewpoints offer fantastic vistas over the loch to the Fell of Eschoncan and Buchan Hill, foothills of the Merrick.

Near the head of Loch Trool, you pass the site of the Battle of Trool. At this spot, in March



In 1307, Robert the Bruce defeated a 1500-strong English army led by Sir Aymer de Valence. Bruce's army numbered only 300 men but, by luring the enemy along the steep sides of Loch Trol, he managed to ambush them and knocked them into the water with boulders.

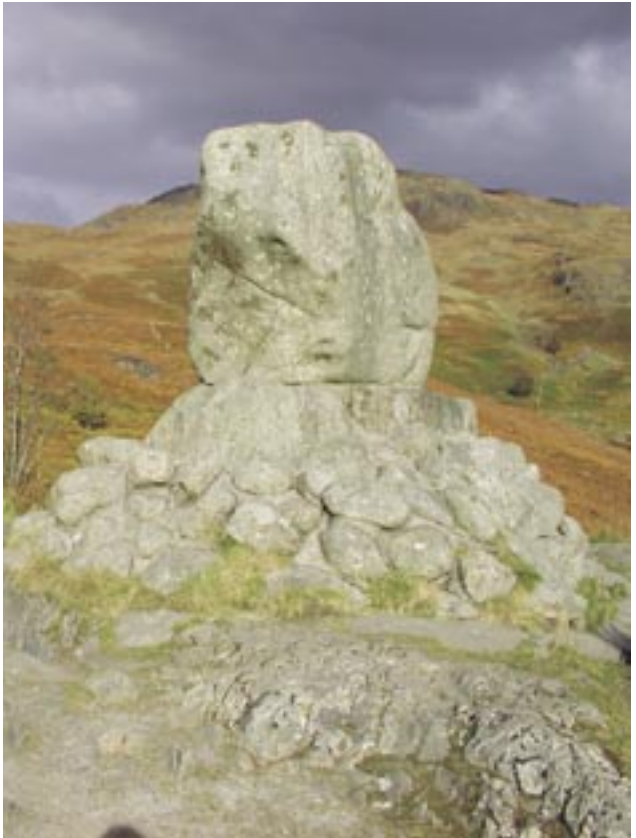


At the bridge

at the head of Loch Trol, leave the SUW to follow the northern shores of the loch. The route winds through Buchan and Glenhead woods, passing waterfalls and burns rushing down from the hills above. Both are excellent examples of oak woodland and are home to a variety of wildlife, from roe deer to redstarts.

Redstart

- 8 Soon you come to a car park where a short detour takes you to Bruce's stone. This large, granite boulder was erected to commemorate the Battle of Trool and sits on a commanding viewpoint overlooking the loch. From here, continue to follow waymarkers back to the car park.



Bruce's stone





Circular forest and woodland walk

7km/4½ miles

Allow 2½ hours

Minor road and hard surface path and track.
Beaten earth, soft in places

Moderate

Stout shoes or boots recommended

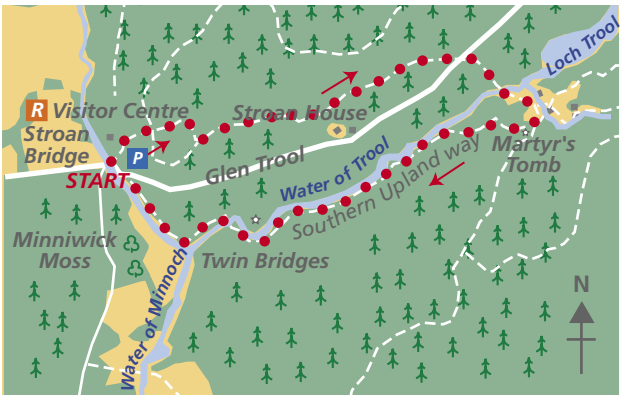
PARKING Follow the A714 towards Girvan, turning right at Bargrennan to Glentrool village. Follow signs to the large car park at Glen Trool Visitor Centre (open from April to the end of October).

START From the visitor centre, follow the yellow waymarkers. The trail winds through the forest with small numbers of exotic species such as grand fir amongst the sitka and Norway spruces. Continue through the forest, passing Spout Head waterfall and enjoy views to Lamachan and Larg hill as you approach Caldons House.

Pass by the house through ancient, native



woodland. A short detour takes you to the Martyrs' Tomb. This memorial commemorates six Covenanters who were shot when caught at prayer.



Covenanters were Scottish Presbyterians who refused to accept the Episcopalian system introduced by King Charles I, which demanded they sign an oath of allegiance to the King rather than God. Known as the 'Killing Times', many died for their beliefs.

Follow the Southern Upland Way along the meandering Water of Trool. There are good views to the hills on both sides of the glen as you approach the 'Twin Bridges'. To the south, Craignaw sits in front of the higher peaks of Larg and Lamachan hill. Leaving the SUW, the path crosses the Twin Bridges and returns to the car park, passing by the attractive rapids and falls at Stroan Bridge.



Stroan Bridge



RIVER CREE & WATER OF MINNOCH

Circular riverside, woodland and forest walk

11.5km/7miles

Allow 3½ hours

Hard surface path and track. Grass path and beaten earth, soft in places. Stiles and steps.

Moderate

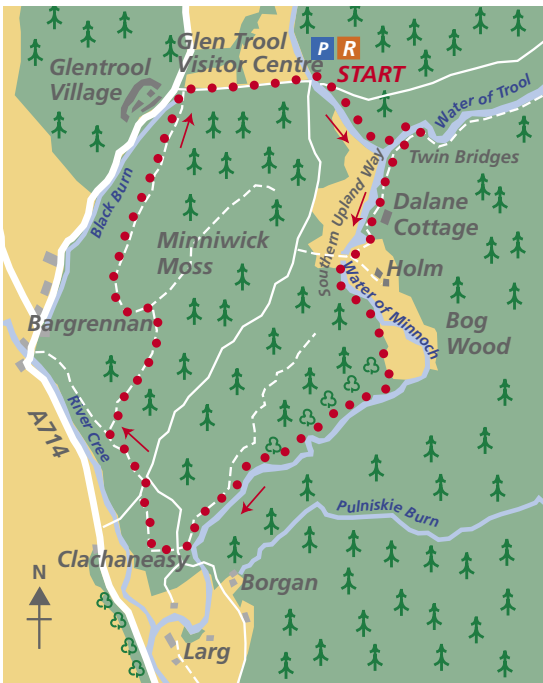
Stout shoes or boots recommended

WARNING: Once or twice a year, usually in winter, this route may flood. Under these conditions it is best to avoid it altogether.

PARKING Follow the A714 towards Girvan, turning right at Bargrennan to Glentool village. Follow signs to the large car park at Glen Trool Visitor Centre (open from April to the end of October).

START A National Cycle Network signpost stands at the start of the path along the Water of Minnoch. Follow the path through woodland to the 'Twin Bridges', built by the Royal Engineers in 1970. Cross the Water of Trool then turn right onto the Southern Upland Way. Soon you reach the junction of the Water of Trool and the Water of Minnoch. Continue along the path to the bridge at Holm of Bargrennan.

Follow the Way into woodland with trees such as birch, oak and hazel. The path heads deep into the woods then crosses a dyke to re-join the river at an attractive, rocky section. Continue



through conifer forest to reach a track. Follow waymarkers, continuing straight ahead at the crossroads. Ignore the next SUW waymarker, indicating a path to the left. Instead, stay on the track and follow cycle route waymarkers.

As you head uphill you are rewarded with good views to Lamachan hill. The track winds through the forest before heading down to meet the road. Turn right and follow the pleasant road back to Glen Trool visitor centre.



Water of Minnoch



MURRAY'S MONUMENT

Circular forest walk

Hard surface path and track

2.5km/1½ miles

Allow 1½ hours

Strenuous (steep climb to monument)

Stout shoes or boots recommended

PARKING Follow the A712 to the Galloway Forest Park. After approximately 11km/6½ miles, the car park for the Grey Mares Tail is on your left.

START From the car park, follow the red waymarkers along the Talnotry Trail.

The stretch of the A712 through the Galloway Forest Park is known as the Queens Way, in commemoration of Queen Elizabeth's silver jubilee. It is a very scenic stretch of road, winding through forests and moorland with rugged hills rising on either side. Other attractions include the Red Deer Range and the Goat Park, large areas of hillside fenced off to contain some of the red deer and wild

Wild goat



goats that roam these hills, and Clatteringshaws Visitor Centre on the shores of the loch (open April to October).



The steep climb up to Murray's Monument is well worth the effort. The monument was erected in 1835 in memory of Alexander Murray, a local shepherd boy who later became professor of oriental languages at Edinburgh University. It stands in a prominent position on the hillside with commanding views of the valley and the northern slopes of Cairnsmore of Fleet.



Red Deer



Stone carvings

The trail continues through the forest and joins the old Edinburgh Road, once used by pilgrims on their way to Whithorn. After crossing the Grey Mare's Tail burn follow the path downhill, through old sheep pens where eerie faces await you. These unusual carvings, set into the stone walls of the pens are part of the Galloway Forest Park Arts Programme.

Follow the path down craggy, heather clad slopes to the car park. A viewing point here is the best place to see the Grey Mare's Tail waterfall as it cascades over rocks before meeting the Palnure burn.





PENNINGHAME ALL ABILITIES

Circular forest walk

1 km/³/₄ miles

Allow ¹/₂ hour

Hard surfaced path.

Easy

Everyday shoes can be worn throughout

Suitable for wheelchair users

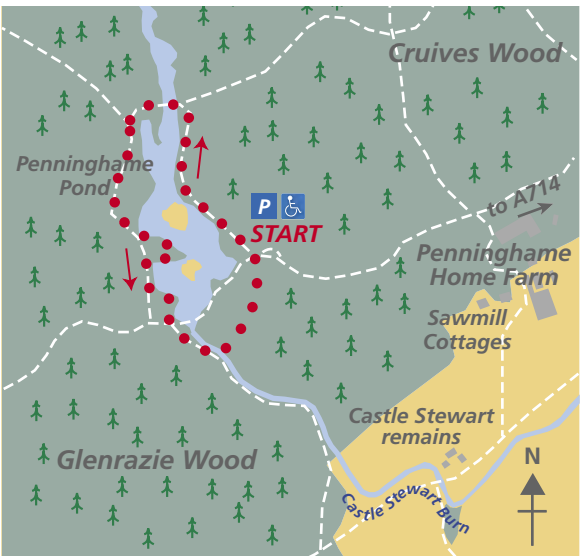
PARKING Follow the A714 towards Girvan.

After approximately 5km/3miles turn left at the sign for Penninghame Pond. Follow the track to reach the car park.

START Follow the waymarked trail round the pond, through the forest and back to the car park.

Penninghame pond was developed to create an all abilities fishing access and trail, providing an ideal opportunity to get out and enjoy the countryside. The path has been specially constructed to allow access by wheelchair users and is great for anyone wishing a short, pleasant stroll. There are also interpretation panels and picnic areas along the way.

Follow the trail along the water's edge through attractive woodland. There are several viewpoints where you can stop and soak up the scenery or spot wildlife. Mallard and moorhen are common in this type of habitat and in the



bushes along the edges of the pond you may see the occasional goldcrest, our smallest breeding bird.

Continue

through the trees, mainly conifers planted in the 1950s. Soon you reach a bridge



Goldcrest

from where you can enjoy good views over the whole pond. Pike occur naturally here and are large, voracious predators, often known as 'freshwater tigers'. After crossing the track, the path loops through the forest before returning over a bridge to the car park.



BLACK WATER TRAIL

Circular riverside and forest walk

2.5km/1 ½ miles

Allow 1 hour

Hard surface path and beaten earth

Easy

Stout shoes or boots recommended

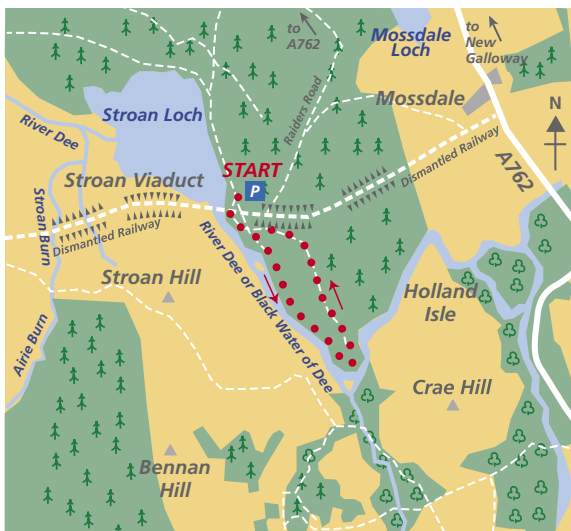
There is a ticket machine at each end of Raiders Road forest drive, charging a small fee

PARKING (APRIL TO OCTOBER) Follow the A762 to New Galloway. Just north of Mossdale, a Forestry Commission sign indicates the entrance to Raiders Road forest drive. Follow Raiders Road to a car park on your left at Stroan Viaduct. Two trails start from here.

PARKING (OCTOBER TO APRIL) When Raiders Road is closed there is sufficient parking for two or three cars just before the ticket machine and barrier at the start. Please take care not to block the entrance. Walk to the start of the route. This adds a total of 5km/3miles.

START A sign just before the viaduct indicates the start of the Black Water Trail. Follow the waymarkers along the Black Water of Dee, returning through the forest.

Raiders Road runs between Clatteringshaws and Mossdale for 10 miles, following the course



of an old drove road. Stroan viaduct, situated just off it was built in 1863 as part of the Portpatrick to Dumfries line. Last used in 1965, it is now home to Daubentons bats and provides an attractive backdrop to Loch Stroan.

The surrounding countryside is rich and varied.

Hills, moors and heath support a host of wildlife. Teal and goosander frequent wetlands, while up on the moors, skylarks



Goosander

take cover amongst the purple moor grass. There are plenty of opportunities to stop and appreciate the rugged scenery along the River Dee or Black Water of Dee, named after its dark, peaty water.

The route returns through quiet, shady, conifer forest. Here birds such as crossbills feed on the cones, using their specially adapted beak to extract seeds. Roe deer also live in the forest but are very elusive and difficult to spot. Continue straight ahead through the trees, ignoring the path off to your left and soon you head back under the viaduct to the car park.





Clatteringshaws Loch

Thanks to the Penfield Project

Photographs - Dumfries and Galloway Tourist Board, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Keith Kirk, Richard Mearns, Peter Norman and Mike Bolam



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

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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 01671 402420

Dumfries & Galloway Council
Ranger Service

t 01988 402401