

STRANRAER AND LOCH RYAN

Linear coastal and town walk with loop

4km/2½ miles

Allow 1½ hours

Hard surface path, roadside pavement and pebbly, sandy beach. Steps.

Moderate

Stout shoes or boots recommended

At high tide, part of this route may be impassable

PARKING is available at the sea front car park next to Agnew Park in Stranraer.

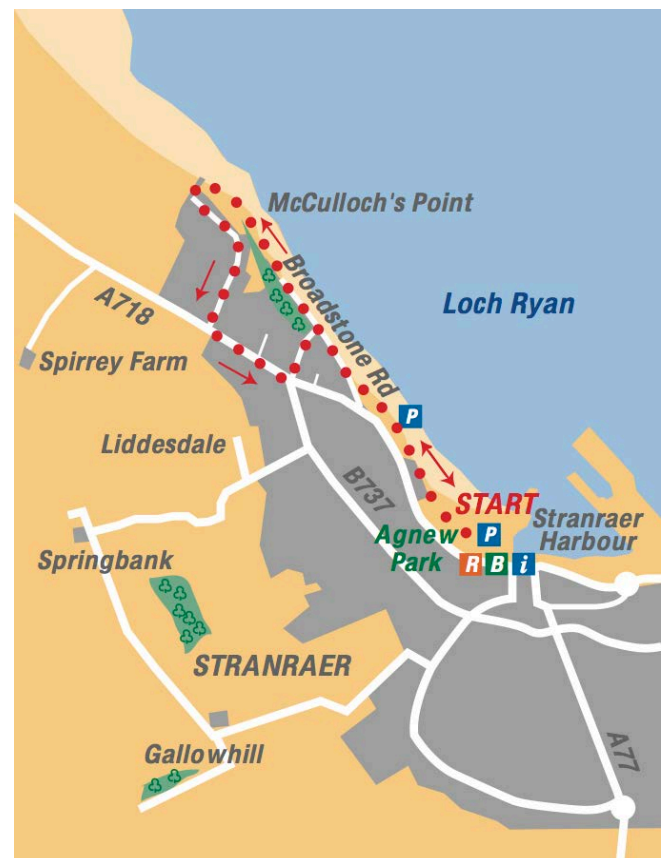
START From the car park, walk through Agnew Park to the lifeboat station. The park is beautifully laid out with exotic looking palm trees. These flourish in the mild climate characteristic of this part of the region, provided by the warm current of the North Atlantic Drift.

As you leave the park, join the path along the western shore of Loch Ryan. There are almost always ferries to be seen here. Stranraer became a bustling ferry port in the late 1800s when the route to Larne became the main Irish Sea crossing, replacing the crossing from Portpatrick to Donaghdee. Cairnryan, on the eastern shore is a major ferry port and was a convoy muster point during both World Wars.

Loch Ryan is a haven for wildlife, providing shelter and a variety of habitats. You may see wigeon bobbing about on the surface or turnstones feeding amongst the sand and shingle. On a clear day there are excellent views across to Cairnryan and if it's very clear then Ailsa Craig is visible beyond the mouth of Loch Ryan. This large plug of rock is the eroded remains of an extinct volcano and granite from it is used to make curling stones, famously supplying the Winter Olympics.

Continue along the path until you reach the very last house on Broadstone Road. If there is a high tide, the route from here may be under water so simply retrace your steps to the car park. Otherwise, follow the embankment along the shore then pick your way along the beach.

Just after the last house on the shore, steps lead onto Larg Road which you follow uphill. Turn left at the main road and follow the pavement back towards town. Turn into Thornbank Road, second on your left and follow this to a flight of steps leading back down to Loch Ryan. Retrace your steps to the car park.



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WIG BAY

- **Circular shoreline and countryside walk**
- **3.5km/2 miles**
- **Allow 1 hour**
- **Hard surface track, roadside pavement and verge and sandy, pebbly shore.**
- **Moderate**
- **Stout shoes or boots recommended.**
- **At high tide part of this route may be impassable**

PARKING is available at the Wig Bay car park and picnic site. From Stranraer, follow the A718 towards Kirkcolm for approximately 8km/5 miles. The car park is on your right, just south of Kirkcolm.

START From the car park follow the sign for the circular walk to Kirkcolm. Continue along the track, enjoying good views across Loch Ryan. Beyond the mouth of Loch Ryan, Ailsa Craig, used by thousands of nesting gannets, can be seen on a good day.

Wig Bay is particularly good for wildlife, providing shelter and food throughout the year. There is a wealth of birdlife, including many species of ducks, gulls and waders. The long, narrow spit of shingle jutting out into the bay, known as The Scar, is alive with nesting terns between May and July and care must be taken not to disturb them. In the fields next to the shoreline, the cheerful, melodic song of the skylark can be heard in summer and flocks of finches flit by in search of food.

During World War II Wig Bay was a seaplane base, where flying boats were maintained and serviced. By the beginning of 1945 over 1000 RAF personnel were stationed here with 170 flying boats to maintain. There are relics of its military past all along the shoreline, the most obvious being the old observation post looking out onto The Scar.

From the observation post follow the sign to Kirkcolm, picking your way along the sandy, pebbly beach. Look out for a grass path alongside the shore then turn left after crossing a burn. Your route back lies along Fishers Road, a pleasant, tree-lined country lane. On reaching the main road, turn left and carefully follow the roadside pavement and verge back to the car park.



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ALDOURAN GLEN

- Circular woodland and countryside walk**
- 3km/2 miles**
- Allow 1 hour**
- Beaten earth, hard surface path and track, minor road and roadside pavement. Steps.**
- Moderate**
- Stout shoes or boots recommended**

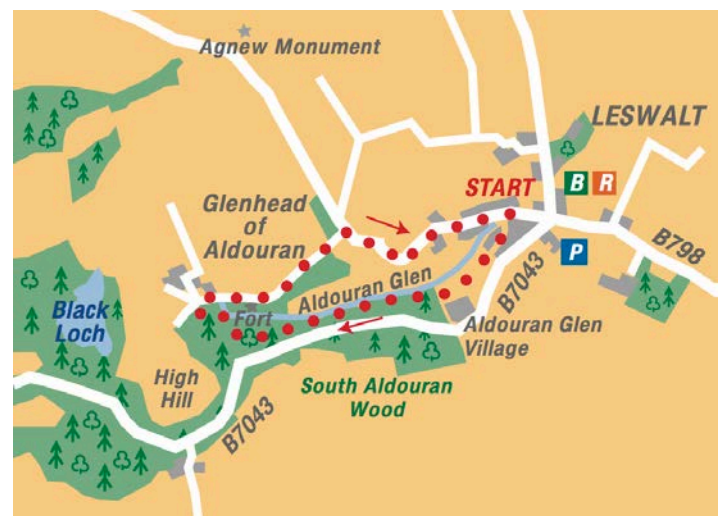
PARKING is available at the village hall in Leswalt, 4.5km/3 miles north-west of Stranraer.

START From the village hall, turn left down the main street then first left into Challoch Crescent. A road immediately on your right takes you along the edge of the playing field and into Aldouran Glen Village. The centre here has wetlands and sensory gardens, designed specifically for those with special needs, but enjoyable for everyone. A path leads through the gardens into Aldouran Glen wood.

Aldouran Glen, acquired by the Woodlands Trust in 1994, was once native woodland before parts of it were planted with conifers after the Second World War. Today, a lot of the ancient woodland has survived and conifers have been replaced with native trees such as oak, ash and birch. Wild garlic lines the path in spring and summer and a burn winds its way down through the glen. At the top end of the glen, the remains of an Iron Age fort sit high above the burn.

Continue up through the glen, turning right when you join a track. Follow the track, bearing right to reach a minor road. Turn right and follow the road downhill into Leswalt.

Behind you, on the hillside sits Agnew Monument, built in 1850, in memory of Sir Andrew Agnew. The last hereditary Sheriff of Wigtown and commander at the Battle of Dettingen in 1743, he later held Blair Castle in Perthshire against the Jacobite forces.



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PORTPATRICK TO LIGHTHOUSE

- **Circular coastal and countryside walk**
- **10km/6 miles**
- **Allow 3½ hours**
- **Hard surface paths and tracks, soft in places. Grass paths, roadside pavement and minor road.**
- **Steps, stile, kissing gates and cattle grids.**
- **Moderate to strenuous**
- **Boots recommended**

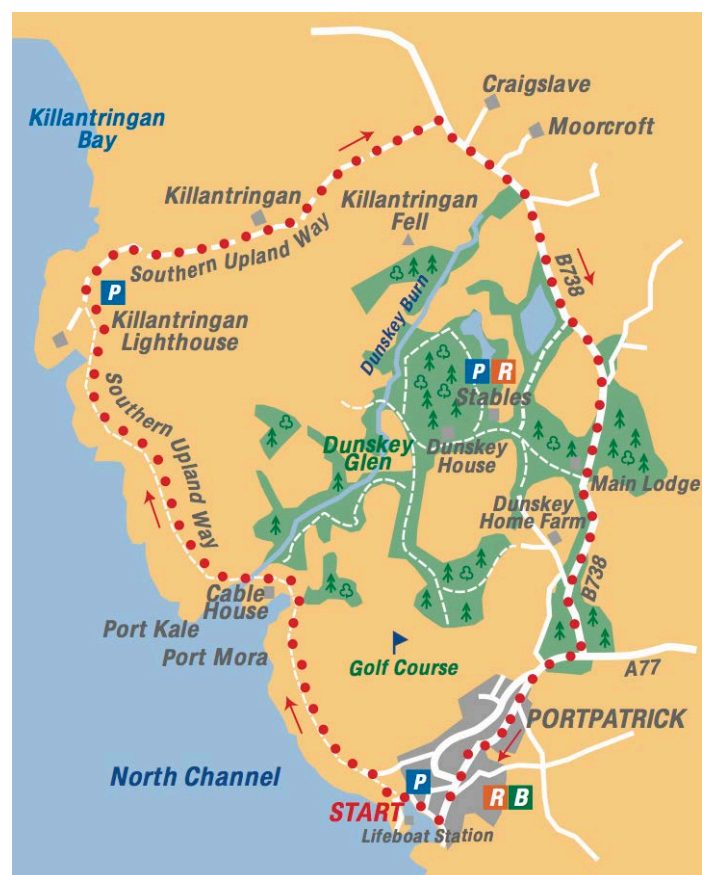
PARKING is available on the seafront in Portpatrick.

START Walk to the northern end of the harbour, towards the lifeboat station. An interpretation board here marks the start of the Southern Upland Way. This long distance, coast-to-coast route runs from Portpatrick to Cockburnspath, covering an impressive 340km/212 miles and a fabulous range of scenery. Follow the signposts and waymarkers along the coast then head inland until you reach the main road. Leave the Southern Upland Way, turning right to follow the road back to Portpatrick, then right again into the village.

The coastal scenery on the first part of this walk is breathtaking, with towering cliffs and secluded, sandy bays. In spring and summer the cliff tops are a blaze of colour with wildflowers such as thrift, spring squill and yellow rattle. Kittiwakes and fulmars nest noisily on the cliffs below, jostling for the best sites. Views along the coastline are stunning and on a clear day you can see over to Ireland.

Soon you cross open moorland and Killantringan Lighthouse lies up ahead. Built in 1900 to warn ships away from the rocky coastline, dangerous cross currents have still caused many a shipwreck. The remains of the Craigantlet, a container ship that ran aground in 1982 can just be seen at low tide beneath the lighthouse.

Continue on past the lighthouse, enjoying views of hills, forests and woodland as you make your way back to Portpatrick.



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

DUNSKY GLEN

- Circular woodland and glen walk to coast**
- 7km/4 miles**
- Allow 2 hours**
- Hard surface tracks and beaten earth, soft in places**
- Moderate**
- Stout shoes or boots recommended**

PARKING is available at Dunskey House gardens and tearoom, situated just off the B738, 1.5km/1 mile north-east of Portpatrick. The gardens and tearoom are open from March to October and there are two short woodland walks that can be accessed through the gardens. The walk described here is the Glen Walk.

START From the car park, follow the track back towards the main gate then follow the blue waymarkers.

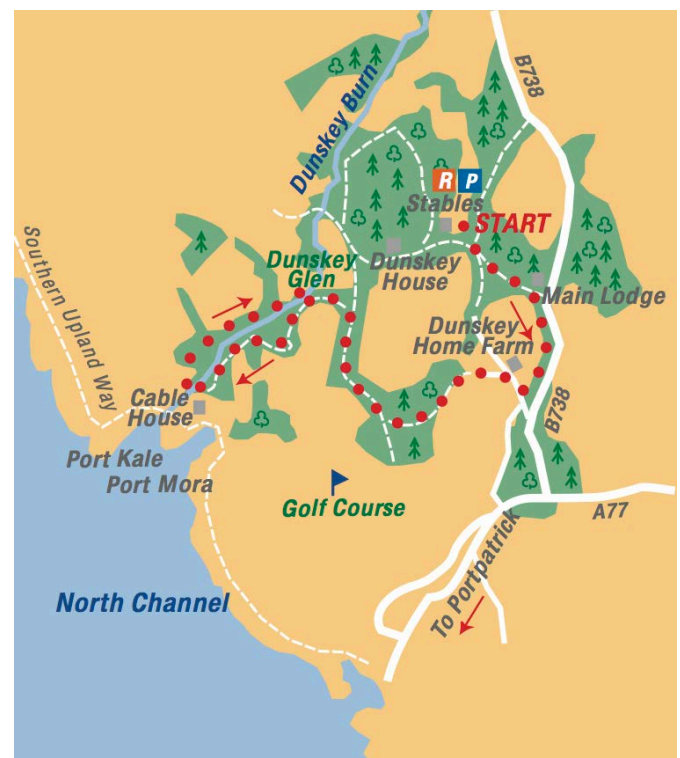
After passing Dunskey Home Farm and the information hut, keep to the main track through the woods, enjoying the peaceful surroundings. Look out for two pillars on your right, remnants of the approach to the original Dunskey House, built in the 17th Century. The present house was built much later, in 1903.

Soon you are on a track high above the steep, wooded sides of the glen. Remain on the track, ignoring any minor paths off to your right. As you head towards the coast enjoy stunning views to the sandy bay at Port Mora, before heading downhill to Port Kale.

The unusual, hexagonal building here was once a cable house and dates back to the 1850s when a submarine telephone cable to Ireland was laid.

The coastal scenery at Port Kale is impressive, with imposing cliffs made of greywacke, typical of southern Scotland. There are excellent views out to sea and, on a clear day, you can see over the North Channel to Ireland, only 34km/22 miles away.

To return, leave the coast and follow the white waymarkers along the lower glen path. The path follows Dunskey Burn then crosses it to reach an attractive waterfall cascading through a rocky gorge. Cross the burn here, turn left then right at the next path junction and follow the waymarkers back to the start.



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WATER OF LUCE

- **Linear riverside walk to coast**
- **4km/2½ miles**
- **Allow 1½ hours**
- **Roadside pavement and verge, beaten earth and grass path, soft in places**
- **Moderate**
- **Stout shoes or boots recommended**

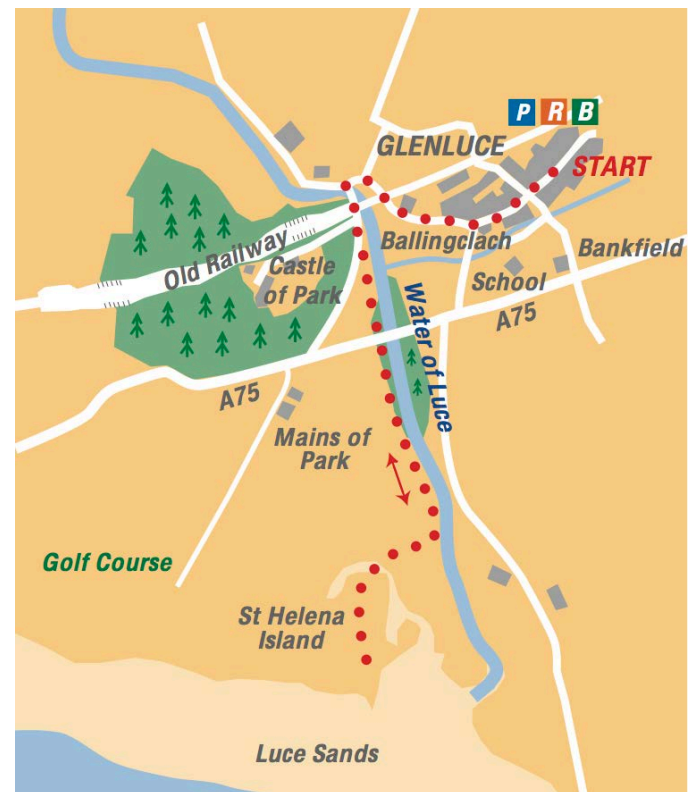
PARKING is available in the centre of Glenluce.

START From Glenluce, follow the road towards New Luce. Turn left at the old railway viaduct then follow signs for St. Helena Island.

The path follows the banks of the picturesque Water of Luce where goosanders and herons can often be seen fishing. Continue through attractive riverside woodland and scrub and soon the path wends away from the river, finally leading to the wide, pebbly shores of Luce Bay.

The rough grassland area on your left as you approach the shore is known as St. Helena Island as it often becomes cut off at high tide. It may be wise to check the tide times as the path can occasionally become flooded after heavy rain and a high tide. The grassland is an important site for breeding birds such as lapwing. Also known as peewits, after their unusual calls, they can often be seen tumbling through the air during acrobatic display flights in spring.

From St. Helena Island, retrace your steps to Glenluce.



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NEW LUCE TO KILHERN

- **Circular farmland and moorland walk**
- **3.5km/5½ miles**
- **Allow 3 hours**
- **Minor road, hard surface and grass tracks, soft in places. Stiles and cattle grid.**
- **Moderate**
- **Stout shoes or boots recommended**

PARKING is available at the village hall in New Luce.

START From the village hall, turn left towards Glenluce for 2.5km/1½ miles. At Cruise Farm, turn left up the track and follow the Southern Upland Way across moorland to reach a quiet road. Turn left and follow the road back to New Luce.

Once you leave the road at Cruise Farm, the scenery changes dramatically. The long, straight track to the derelict farmhouse at Kilhern crosses open heather moorland. There is little shelter but the walk is pleasant and peaceful. In summer, meadow pipits and curlews join the Galloway cattle on the moor. Over to your right on Kilhern Moss, hut circles and cairns are a reminder of former occupation.

At Kilhern continue left across moorland to the Caves of Kilhern. These appear as a pile of boulders on a small rise to your right. This Neolithic chambered long cairn was constructed 4000-5000 years ago as a communal burial place. The remains of four chambers can still be seen but many of the stones have been removed.

The route soon heads downhill, with excellent views to the Cross Water of Luce. After passing a conifer plantation look out for the remains of hut circles, further evidence of the area's past.

On reaching the road, a short detour to your right takes you to the Loups of Barnshangan, an attractive waterfall and gorge. Cross a stile on your left to reach a bridge for the best views then return to the road and continue your route back to New Luce.



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