

# BALLOCH WOOD

- Circular forest walk**
- 3km/2 miles**
- Allow 1½ hours**
- Roadside pavement, minor road and beaten earth**
- Moderate**
- Stout shoes or boots recommended**

**PARKING** is available in the centre of Creetown, by the Clock Tower.

**START** 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 the start of the path through Balloch Wood. Follow the waymarkers along the Burnside Trail.

The path initially follows the edge of the wood. The trees here are a mixture of conifers and broadleaves, including a stand of elegant Italian alders. On your left enjoy the excellent views over Creetown and the Cree estuary, with Kirkmabreck church in the foreground. This church, built between 1831 and 1834 replaces two earlier churches in the area.

As you round the corner, Balloch Burn rushes through the gorge below. The path continues through mixed woodland, high above the burn until it descends into a spectacular, steep-sided gorge.

Here, a mass of woodrush clings to the sedimentary Greywacke stone walls. Long trails of hanging ivy, ferns and mosses give it a primeval look. Grey wagtails can sometimes be seen darting from boulder to boulder over the fast-flowing burn. Also, look out for the 'Chalybeate', or 'Red Well' appearing as a hole in the rock. The word Chalybeate refers to any water that contains iron salts and was often thought to have curative properties. The water seeping from this well, however, is highly poisonous and not for drinking!

Soon the path leaves the burn and returns through mainly coniferous woodland. Here, away from the noise of the burn, the contrasting quiet is occasionally interrupted by the calls of birds such as great tits and coal tits. Continue to follow the waymarkers back to the start, then retrace your steps to the car park.



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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.