CASTLE DOUGLAS TOWN TRAIL

- Circular town walk
- 2.5km/l½ miles
- Allow I hour
- Roadside pavements
- Easy
- Any appropriate footwear

PARKING is available at the Tourist Information Centre at Market Hill car park. NX767626.

START from the car park. Proceed onto King Street, the town's main shopping area, keeping a look out for the 'Castle Douglas Pig'! It appears on the stonework of a house in King Street (see photo for a clue). As you leave the car park, the Art Gallery is on your left. Directly opposite this, on the other side of the street, is the Imperial Hotel. Known formerly as the Globe Inn, it had facilities to stable horses until the 1920's when they were superseded by buses. Similar facilities were also provided at the Douglas Arms, towards the bottom of King Street. Note the sign on its wall which dates from cattle droving days and shows distances to various towns and cities.

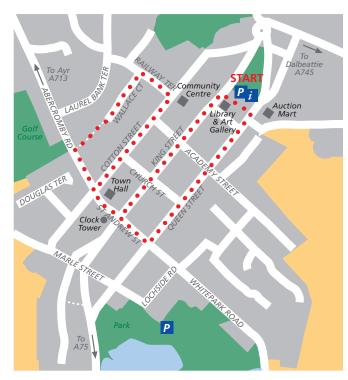
If you visit the town between May and July you will hear the screaming calls of swifts overhead. It is believed that when young swifts fly from their nest, usually under the eaves of buildings, they never land again until they are old enough to breed – some two years later!

Next, turn right at the Douglas Arms into St. Andrew Street and walk to the Town Hall. Built in 1862, its frontage bears the town emblem, a heart with wings. This relates to the story of how Robert the Bruce's heart was carried into battle by Sir James Douglas who threw it forward saying, "Forward dear heart, as thou would want tae dae. Douglas will follow thee."

Continue along the street to the junction and turn right into Cotton Street. William Douglas built a cotton mill in this general area in 1792, giving the street its name. The former High School, now a community centre, stands at the top of the street, opposite the street known as Railway Terrace. At the end of this road, the purpose of its name becomes clear in the left turn into Wallace Court, for this is the route of the former Stranraer to Dumfries railway line (1861–1965) which used to cut through Castle Douglas. Follow this road down then up the gentle slope to the old railway bridge at Abercromby Road, enjoying this quiet area of the town.

At the bridge, the route of the track can just be made out past the Golf Course if you cross the road to the other side of the bridge. Follow Abercromby Road down towards St John's RC church and cross Cotton Street into St Andrew Street retracing your steps to the Clock Tower, the location of the original Town Hall. The original tower, built by Sir William Douglas, was destroyed by fire in 1892 and a new one met the same fate forty years later. Henry J. Hewat of Paterson, New Jersey, USA, donated the present clock tower to Castle Douglas in May 1935, as the plaque on the wall of the tower will testify.

Cross over King Street and continue along St Andrew Street to the Kings Arms Hotel, which is believed to be around 200 years old. Turn left along Queen Street and continue up its length. This was a planned residential area of 18th century Castle Douglas. Near the top of the street is an unusual hexagonal shaped building, the auction mart. A cattle market has existed in Castle Douglas since 1819 and it is the most important industry of the town. The nearby Market Inn was once the veterinary surgeon's house. You are now back where you started at the Market Hill car park. The mound beside the Tourist Information Centre is the former bandstand.



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