

CASTLE LOCH VIA MARLAKE

- Circular town and country walk**
- 8km/5 miles**
- 2 hours**
- Hard surfaced and grass tracks and roads.**
Stiles, gates, boardwalk and cattle grid
- Moderate**
- Stout shoes or boots recommended**

PARKING Enter Lochmaben on the Dumfries Road. At the sharp right turn in front of the Bruce Hotel turn left and follow the parking signs. Pass the public toilets on your left and you will soon reach the car park.

START Leave the car park on the exit side, cross the road to Croft Terrace and turn left. You will soon meet the Dumfries Road, which you should cross, turning right in front of the Crown Hotel. After 30m you will reach a tarmac track to the left that runs between the houses. This leads you past the caravan park, the golf course clubhouse and around the foot of Castle Hill. This mound is the modern home for the 2nd green and the 3rd tee, but was once crowned with a motte and bailey castle built by the Bruce family around 1170.

Continue alongside the golf course, this section affords good views, (to your left) of the flat-topped Burnswark Hill, the site of a succession of ancient forts and a Roman military training camp.

Just before the farm you will find a pedestrian gate and a public footpath sign on your right. Follow this path over the burn and through a small wood. Take care at this point - you are crossing the golf course. Continue through the kissing gate by the cemetery wall and, on reaching the minor road, turn left and continue alongside the forestry plantation. Pass the road end to Smallrigg Farm and just after the plantation you will reach a field gate opposite the cottage.

Enter the field and follow Marlake Burn to the second field. Take a diagonal line across the field to the corner of the wood. If this field is growing silage then walk clockwise around the margin. Pass over the burn, through the pedestrian gate and follow the fence line to reach the Dalton Road. Cross carefully and follow the signs for Lochmaben Castle.

Turn left and through the kissing gate (or over the cattle grid). The loch side path soon bears off to the right towards the bird hide, but you should first take time to visit Lochmaben Castle. The peninsula on the southern

shore of Castle Loch was probably first used by Edward I of England as a defensive site for an earth and timber palisade. This changed hands regularly during the Wars of Independence until 1385 when the stone castle was built.

Return to the path by retracing your steps and turning left. Follow the boardwalk and the bridge over Valison Burn. Climb the stile and follow the fence line around the edge of the tussocks of reeds and then along the plantation boundary. Pass through the field gate to reach the verge of the main road. Carefully cross the road and head down the minor road towards Halleaths. Take the first minor road on the left that climbs to higher ground giving fine views over Castle Loch. Pass over the old railway bridge to join the Lockerbie Road and bear right for the centre of Lochmaben. Keep to the right hand side of the Town Hall (with the clock tower) and take the first left off Queen Street. At the top of Welldale Place turn right to return 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.