

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.

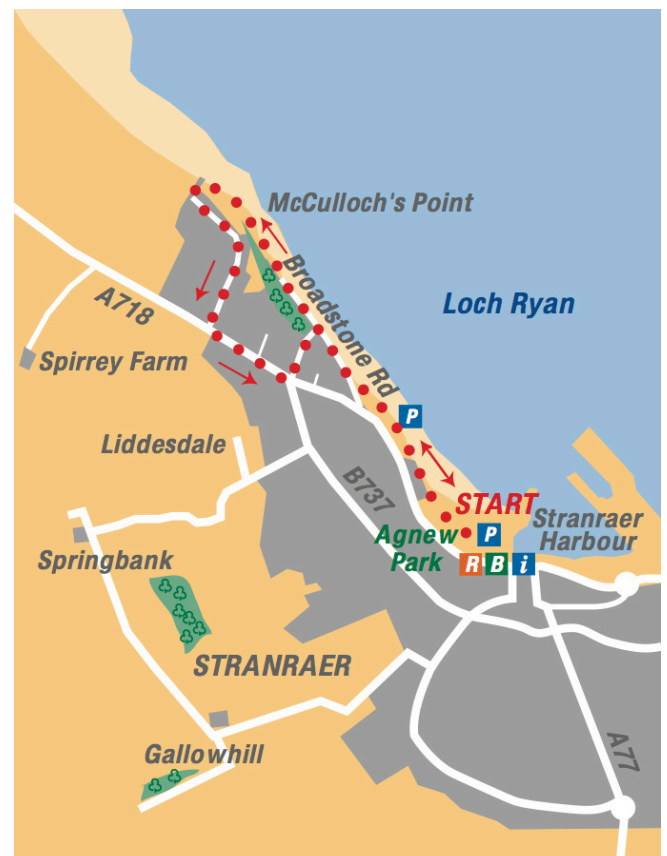
START From the car park, walk through Agnew Park to the lifeboat station. The park is beautifully laid out with exotic looking palm trees. These flourish in the mild climate characteristic of this part of the region, provided by the warm current of the North Atlantic Drift.

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 Donaghadee. 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 widgeon 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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