

OLD CHURCH WALK

- Circular woodland and farmland walk.**
- 3.5km/2¼ miles**
- Allow 1 hour**
- Minor road, hard surfaced tracks and field. Gates and ladder stiles**
- Moderate**
- Boots recommended**

PARKING From Dumfries follow the A76 Glasgow Road through Sanquhar to Kirkconnel. At the far end of the village you will pass the war memorial on the left just before a sharp right hand bend around Kirkconnel Parish Churchyard. Take the next unsigned road to the right. This crosses the railway line before heading uphill to Kirkland. After a mile or so you will reach a car park on the right with an information shelter, this is the start point of your walk.

START Head downhill over the Stank Burn Bridge by Kirkland Cottage. Turn right at the crossroads following the sign for 'St Connel's Church via Vennel'. Cross the Glenaylmer Burn Bridge and continue to the end of the Pine Wood. Climb the ladder stile into the field and follow the dyke around Horseshoe Plantation with its noisy resident rooks. Climb three more stiles to reach the track above Kirkland Farm; turn right past the cattle sheds and continue uphill. Take a breather and enjoy the view. Ahead stands the broad shouldered Kirkland Hill; behind stand the wind turbines of Windy Standard wind farm.

At Vennel Cottage follow the Covenanters' Trail (CT) sign for Kirkland and pass through the field gate to the right of the steading. Follow the track round the back of the steading and exit over the ladder stile. Descend the track to the ford and footbridge across Glenaylmer Burn, cross the burn and continue along the track to cross the next burn.

From this point you have the option of climbing the ladder stile for a detour to The Greymare's Tail waterfall. Take the high track following the dyke to the left side of the burn, and then continue along the fence line (ignore the stile to the left). Descend into the valley and continue to the base of the falls for the best view. Return to the main route.

Continue past the sheepfold to reach the churchyard containing the remains of St Connel's Church. You can enter the grounds using the stile in the wall or the gates at the far end. Local miners, organised by their minister, carried out excavation of the church during the General Strike of 1926. Kirkconnel Parish Heritage Society recently rebuilt the Miners' Cairn and its history is explained on the information board.

On leaving the churchyard, close the gates and follow the dyke, cross the ladder stile and continue alongside the fence towards the next farm. Climb the final ladder stile over a dyke and make for the waymark post just to the left of the corrugated barn where you turn left along the track. Continue through the plantation and at Kirkland bear right to return to the crossroads. Turn right 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.