

SCREEL HILL

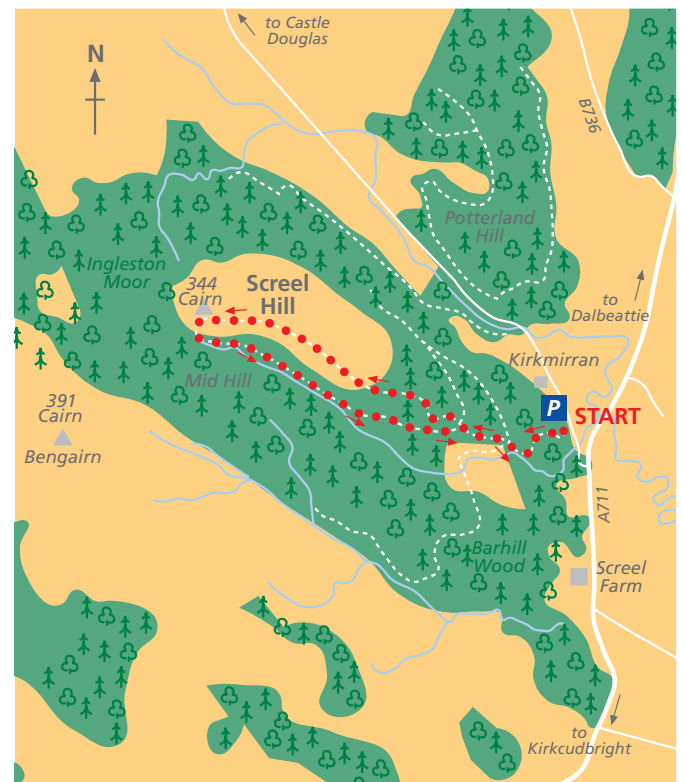
- **Circular forest and upland walk**
- **5.6km/3½ miles**
- **Allow 2½ hours**
- **Hard surface tracks. Also beaten earth and rough grassland which are soft and steep in places**
- **Strenuous**
- **Boots essential**

PARKING is available at the small Forest Enterprise car park on the minor road between Gelston and Auchencairn, approximately 10.5km/6 miles south of Castle Douglas. NX800547.

At 1126ft (344m), Scree Hill is smaller than its neighbour Bengairn. However, it provides an excellent, short hill walk with some fantastic views. Despite its relatively low height, conditions at the top may be far worse than at the car park so warm clothing, a map and a compass are advisable.

START from the car park. The route is waymarked from here. Follow the road uphill until the path leaves the track and enters the forest on the left. Here the ground gets rougher underfoot and the path gets steeper. Continue to follow the waymarkers and soon you come out of the forest into an area of heather and bracken with rocky outcrops. Listen for the distinctive croaking of ravens as they soar above you and watch out for red grouse, which you might come across along the way. Follow the well-worn path to the top of the hill where, on a clear day, you can get spectacular panoramic views. To the north east is the Queensberry range and to the north west you can see Cairnsmore of Carsphairn and the Rhins of Kells. There are also views over the Solway Firth. Auchencairn Bay and Orchardton Bay are in the foreground, along with Hestan Island. This island lies midway between Almorness and Balcarly Points and is joined to the mainland at Almorness by a causeway. Looking across the Solway, see if you can pick out the towns of Silloth, Maryport, Workington and Whitehaven which lie from left to right along the Cumbrian coastline. You should also be able to pick out the high peaks of Skiddaw, Grasmoor, Great Gable and Scafell Pike!

From here, follow the path along to the Cairn at the other end where you can look across to Bengairn. Scree Hill and its neighbour Bengairn dominate this part of the Solway coast. The path then heads downhill into the forest, through a natural archway and soon joins a forest track that takes you back to the path you started on. You can then retrace your steps to the car park.



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