

THE PARKS

Circular park and riverside walk

6km/3½ miles

1½ hrs

Hard surface paths/tracks (some shared with cyclists)

Moderate

Stout shoes recommended

Dock park, Crichton grounds and pedestrian/cycle route are suitable for wheelchair users. Dogs should be kept on a lead.

PARKING is in the car park at the entrance to Dock Park (St Michael's Bridge, Whitesands).

START Follow the pedestrian/cycle track between the metal arches at the riverside entrance to Dock Park. These arches represent Sweetheart Abbey and were used to promote 'Dumfries in miniature' at a Glasgow Garden Festival during the 1980s. Continue downstream alongside this tidal section of the River Nith, exit the park and cross the road opposite the entrance to Castledykes Park.

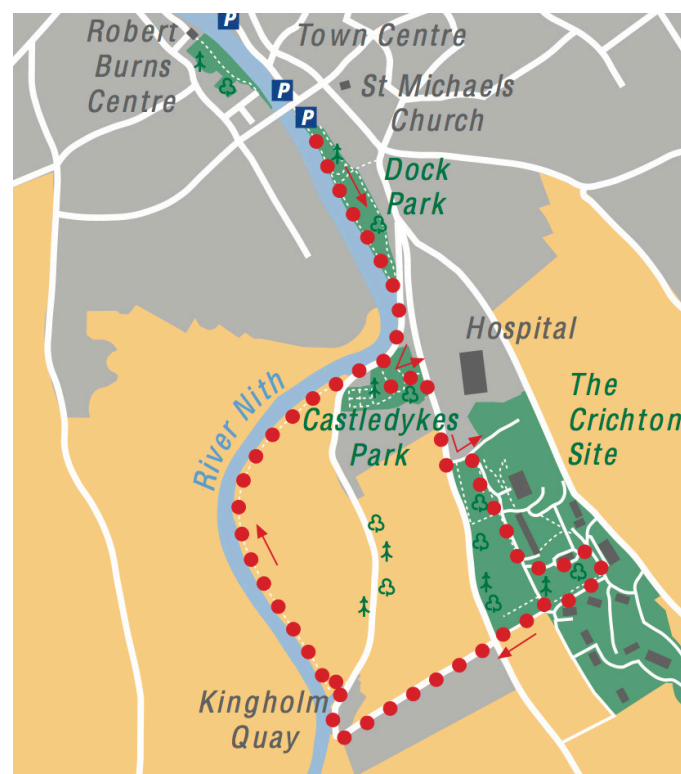
Follow the main path through the park in a broad anticlockwise sweep, take time to visit the sunken garden and look out for the site of the Royal Castle of Dumfries, built in 1186 by William the Lion. On leaving the park turn right along the public road, then take the first left and enter the grounds of the Crichton Royal Hospital.

This Victorian landscaped estate was established as the grounds for a pioneering psychiatric hospital and the handsome sandstone buildings and gardens are now home to The Crichton University Campus and Business Park. The higher ground at the Crichton affords good views across the Nith to the granite mass of Criffel (see walk 7). Take the main/middle drive that sweeps to the right. On the corner turn right on to the gravel garden path. At the end of this section bear left on the flagstone path and pass under the stone and hedge archway. Pass through the water garden, up the steps and along the gravel path that skirts the topside of the playing field.

Climb the embankment steps and turn left across the staggered junction, heading for the Crichton Memorial Church. Take either route around the church and turn right at the top of the hill (signed 'University Campus'). The building straight ahead is Easterbrook Hall and the north wing (in front of you) houses a museum presenting the story of pioneering mental health care in south west Scotland, a gallery of patient art and a wealth of hospital related artifacts. The museum is open Thursday and Friday afternoons (all year) and Saturdays (from Easter to September).

At the end of the car park turn right down the tree lined footpath. At the end of this path turn left and immediately right between the 'no entry' signs and continue to the public road.

Turn left to the roundabout, then right, down Kingholm Loaning to Kingholm Quay. Keep hard in to the left hand side to avoid oncoming vehicles as you round the sharp right hand bend. Continue through the village to the harbour, and turn left on to National Cycle Route 7, which is a shared pedestrian and cycle path. This will take you past the cricket pitch and back to Dock 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.