

THE MACHARS : THE GREEN ROUTE

20 MILES. This route in the southwest Machars takes in Mochrum, Port William, Monreith and Whithorn, where a range of local services can be found. The following route description begins in Whithorn but any of these locations would be a convenient starting point.

You may wish to take time to explore the ancient pilgrimage town Whithorn before heading northwest through the peninsula. Distant views including the Fell of Barhullion are a backdrop to the farmed landscape. You will pass through the lush woodlands of Monreith Estate and the village of Mochrum before moving inland at Monreith, passing through a rugged landscape of rocky knolls, dykes and aromatic gorse. The landscape softens on the approach to Whithorn.

Whithorn. The Whithorn Priory Museum and Visitor Centre tell the fascinating story of “Candida Casa” – the site of Scotland’s first church built by St Ninian in the fifth century – and the towns subsequent development as a centre of medieval pilgrimage. The recent archaeological excavations have added greatly to a detailed understanding of life at the time.

The Visitor Centre includes an audio-visual show, exhibitions, guided tours, priory, museum, crypts and discovery centre. Open daily from April to October.

Monreith Estate. Gardens and walks surround the late 18th century Monreith House, created by Sir Herbert Maxwell. Open from April to September.

Drumtroddan Cup and Ring Marked Rocks and Standing Stones. Approached via Drumtroddan farm, these enigmatic remnants from the Bronze Age some 3-4,000 years ago attest to the talents and interests of our ancestors.

The purpose and meaning of the carvings remains unclear but the standing stones form an alignment which probably acted as a marker of a significant time in the annual cycle of life.

Druchttag Motte. On the north side of Mochrum, this motte, which was once the site of a timber castle, remains a symbol of 12th century lordship.

Barsalloch Point Fort. Public access improvements to the remains of this promontory fort at the top of the heugh are ongoing. The area has produced evidence of encampments of some of the earliest settlers colonizing the area after the last glaciation at a time when the sea would have washed the base of the cliff. The fort itself was in use during the Iron Age.

Kirkmaiden. A short diversion to the south end of Monreith Bay passes an attractive otter memorial to the author Gavin Maxwell before you reach the remains of the Kirkmaiden church dedicated to Saint Medana. There are fragments of 10th century crosses in the graveyard and the restored chancel is the burial vault of the Maxwells of Monreith. The attractive bay is rich in wildlife, including bird’s foot trefoil, six-spot burnet moths and nesting whitethroats.

Glasserton Church. A 10th century cross found in the church yard suggests early origins as a Christian centre. The present building with private galleries for the lairds of Physgill and Glasserton and central pulpit is an example of internal arrangements introduced for Presbyterian use.

St Ninian’s Cave. A path from Kidsdale through a wooded glen leads to a beautiful bay and St. Ninian’s Cave. Tradition has it that the cave was used as a retreat by St. Ninian and his followers. The Crosses carved into the walls and freestanding stone crosses now removed to the Priory Museum in Whithorn, confirm that it was a place of pilgrimage.



Map © Crown Copyright and Database right 2013. All rights reserved.
Ordnance Survey licence 100016994

ON SHARED USE PATHS • Please be courteous and be prepared to slow down or stop if necessary • Give way to pedestrians, horse-riders and wheelchair users, leaving them plenty of room • Carry a bell and use it - not all pedestrians can see you • Always follow the Highway Code • Be seen - most accidents to cyclists happen at junctions • Fit lights, wear a helmet and light and reflective clothing • Respect land management activities such as farming and forestry and take litter home • Be self-sufficient - in remote areas carry food, repair kit, map and waterproofs.

Bikes on Buses – the 500/X75 carries bikes along the A75 www.dumgal.gov.uk/timetables