

THE MACHARS : THE RED ROUTE

17 MILES. This route explores the countryside of the southeast Machars overlooking Wigtown Bay. It takes in the Isle of Whithorn, Sorbie and Whithorn where a full range of local services can be found. The following route description begins at Whithorn, but any of these locations would be a convenient starting point.

The route runs southeast towards the Isle of Whithorn through a landscape familiar in form, if not detail, to the generations of pilgrims who arrived by sea at the Isle on route to Whithorn. The route then runs north, passing Portyerrock and Rigg Bays with views to Wigtown Bay and the hills beyond. Heading west the route strikes inland to Sorbie where the classic landscape of rounded glacial drumlins (hillocks) characteristic of the central Machars begins to develop. The return to Whithorn is southwards down the central spine of the Machars.

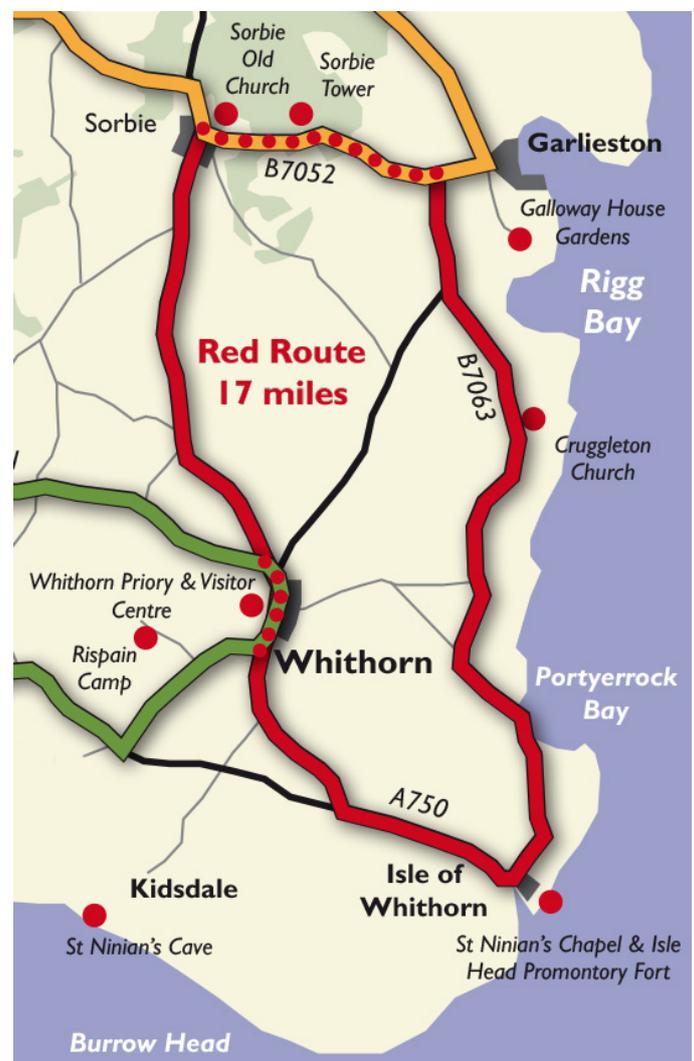
Whithorn. The Whithorn Priory Museum and Visitor Centre tell the fascinating story of “Candida Casa” – the site of Scotland’s first church built by St Ninian in the fifth century – and the towns subsequent development as a centre of medieval pilgrimage. The recent archaeological excavations have added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

The Isle of Whithorn was a busy 19th century port, trading with Ireland and the Isle of Man. It also has a history of shipbuilding dating from 1799. Now a popular tourist village, the Isle is situated around harbour offering the visitor a variety of activities such as sea angling, boating and bird watching.

St. Ninian’s Chapel and Isle Head Promontory Fort. St. Ninian’s Chapel was built in the 13th century, probably on the site of the original chapel, which served pilgrims arriving by sea to visit St. Ninian’s shrine at Whithorn. Earthworks of an Iron Age fort can also be seen on the headland.

Cruggleton Church. A fine example of a restored 12th century parish church reflecting the patronage of the Lords of Galloway. The internal chancel arch is original. A key is available from Cruggleton farm. The ruins of Cruggleton Castle – the stronghold of the Lords of Galloway who held sway in the semi-independent “kingdom” of Galloway during the early medieval period – are situated on clifftops to the east of the church. It can be visited via a footpath from Galloway House Gardens. There is no access from the road.



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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